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THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES

OF

PEG WOFFINGTON

WITH

PICTURES OF THE PERIOD IN WHICH SHE LIVED.

BY

J. FITZGERALD MOLLOY,

AUTHOR OF "COURT LIFE BELOW STAIRS,"

ETC., ETC.

Third Edition.

IN ONE VOLUME.

HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

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BREAD STREET HILL, LONDON,
Bungay, Suffolk.

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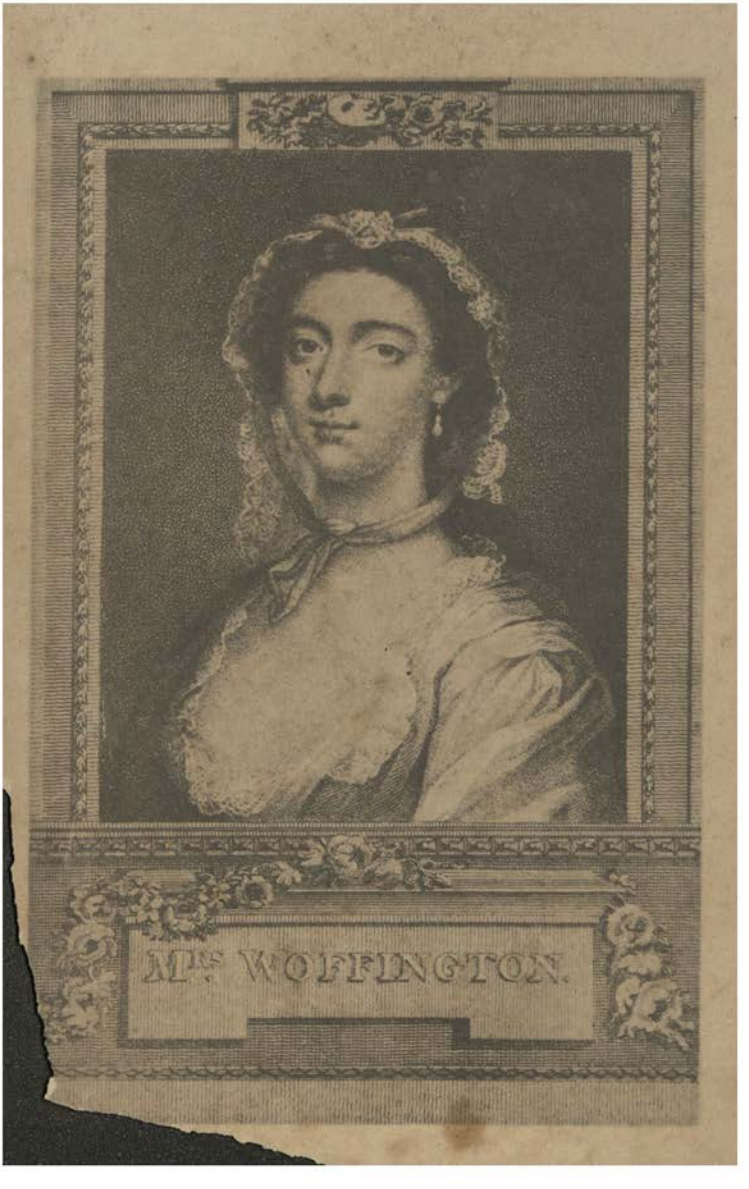
Mrs WOFFINGTON.

TO MISS ELLEN TERRY.

DEAR MADAM,

The brilliant actress who forms the subject of these pages rendered such service to the drama in the past century as entitles her to a prominent position in its annals. You as a distinguished artist have achieved such histrionic triumphs in the present century as shall render your name illustrious in the same history.

Seldom, if indeed ever, has such a happy trinity of genius, grace, and beauty been united in one person. The perfection and tenderness of your tragedy, the justness and brilliancy of your comedy are alike subjects on which innumerable pens have discoursed with vast pleasure, themes on which all who have witnessed your performances have dwelt with uncommon satisfaction. You have idealized your personations. You have realized the highest poetical conceptions. You have delighted the most cultured intelligences of two worlds.

As a testimony though most poor, as a tribute though most slight to the incalculable services you have rendered unto art, I gladly avail myself of your permission to dedicate to you the labour of many months, to inscribe your illustrious name on the title-page of this volume.

Faithfully yours always,

FITZGERALD MOLLOY.

PREFACE.

No biography of Peg Woffington, the most brilliant actress of her century, has up to this time been written. Her very name might have been forgotten had not a great novelist rescued her memory from oblivion and directed interest to her career. Yet this has been achieved by the aid of fiction, as he acknowledged to me a little while before laying down his pen for ever. But Charles Reade, as was to be expected from a master hand, struck the proper key-note of her life in the novel which bears the great actress's name; so that, though the scenes by which he surrounded her are imaginary, they are yet in perfect harmony with her character.

Indeed, there was scarce necessity to borrow colours from fiction wherewith to brighten the portrait of

one whose life was in itself a romance. I have endeavoured in the following pages to give this portrait as caught in transitory glances afforded by the oftentimes curt and scattered mention of her name in the biographies, letters, journals, and criticisms of her contemporaries; just as by the occasional opening of a door, one without an apartment obtains glimpses of a striking figure passing in the crowd within. But these have been sufficient, if not to present an etching, at least to give a portrait, faithful in its lines, though not lacking hues beseeming subjects purely ideal.

As an actress she was the most central figure in her brief bright day, and as such I have presented her, surrounded by a brilliant group of players, wits, critics, men of fashion and of letters who were her friends or her contemporaries. The remaining space on the canvas I have filled in with views of town life as it was in her day; for encircled by such personages, and seen against the lights and shadows of such a background, she can alone be properly estimated.

Concerning David Garrick, who for a time played an important part in the drama of her life, and who

[redacted]ominent a position in the history [redacted] middle of the last century, I have [redacted]y. Moreover, I have been enabled [redacted]letters concerning his early life, and the [redacted] which his adoption of the stage were [redacted]by his family. Portions of some of these [redacted]en given in the later editions of Mr. Forster's [redacted]f Oliver Goldsmith,' but they have never before printed in full, and will, I trust, prove enter[redacted]ing to that very considerable section of the public [redacted]ncerned in aught regarding the history of the [redacted]eatre.

The task of giving sketches of the numerous characters introduced in these pages, sufficiently vivid to interest, yet necessarily brief with regard to the limits of the volume, is one which will be readily recognized as fraught with difficulty; but labour has not been spared in striving to render the book acceptable to the public which has already extended a kindly appreciation to similar efforts.

FITZGERALD MOLLOY.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

[illegible]tle Water-carrier and the Foreign Lady—Madame Violante and [illegible]rs. Woffington—Pupil to a Dancer—The Booth in Fownes Court —Little Peg in 'The Beggars' Opera'—Charles Kelly and 'The Devil to Pay'—At the Aungier Street Playhouse—Dancing between the Acts—Playing Ophelia, Her Beauty and her Triumph —The Part of Phillis—Falling in Love—A Young Gentleman of Quality and his Ways—A Journey to London Town . . 1

CHAPTER II.

In Merry London Town—The King's Court and the Prince's—Views of the Streets—The Coffee-houses and their Frequenters—Round Covent Garden—The Players' Quarters and Clare Market—Laws [illegible]ncerning the Playhouses and their Audiences—Dress of the Period—Johnson, Garrick, and Savage—At the Fountain Tavern—Visiting on 'Clean Shirt Day'—Reynolds, Pope, and Smollett—Quin at Drury Lane, Cibber at Covent Garden—Vauxhall, its Ways and its Visitors—With Lady Caroline Petersham—A Strange Advertisement 14

CHAPTER III.

A Faithless Lover—Fortune-hunting—News of a Marriage—Hatred and Vengeance—Peg Woffington's Plot—Young Mr. Adair—The Ridotto at Vauxhall Gardens—Miss Dallaway and her Friends—A Scene—Reproaches—A Lover's Departure 30

CHAPTER

John Rich, Manager of Covent Garden—
Treatment of Dramatic Authors—The Wo
Him—Sensation in the Town—Actors at
Tragedy in Real Life—Theophilus Cibber—
Appearance in London—An Old-fashioned Co
Admiration of the Town—Sir Harry Wildair—
Love with Her . . . . . .

CHAPTER V.

Peg Woffington's Engagement at Drury Lane—Kitty Clive,
for Tragedy—Delane the Student of T. C. D.—Mackli
Adventures—The Turning-point of his Career—His W
Shylock—What Mr. Pope said—Young David Garrick—His
Life at Lichfield—Becomes a Wine-Merchant—Among the
at the Bedford—Hesitates to go on the Stage—Falls in Love
Peg Woffington—In the Green-room at Drury Lane—Sir Char
Hanbury Williams—The Woffington's Definition of an Age . 6

CHAPTER VI.

Garrick's Irresolution—Plays at Ipswich under a false Name—First Appearance in Town—A Memorable Night—Description of his Richard—The Talk of the Town—Persons of Distinction at the Playhouse—Our little Poetical Hero—Letters to Peter—The Wine-Merchant will not be Comforted—David's Arguments and Fair Promises—The Lying Valet—Mimicking the Old Players—The Favour of Great Men—Going to Dublin with Peg Woffington 85

CHAPTER VII.

Excitement in Dublin—A Warm Greeting—The Delight of the Town—Hamlet and Ophelia—Back to London—The Rival Playhouse—Quin's Reputation—His Contempt for Garrick—Quin and Macklin—A Green-Room Quarrel—Making it up—Charming Susanna Cibber—'A Romp and a Good-natured Boy'—Theo Cibber's Baseness—Elopement, Rescue, and Action—Legal Bathos—Woffington and Garrick at Drury Lane 106

CHAPTER VIII.

Peg Woffington and Garrick keep House—Old Colley Cibber—Drinking Tea at Peggy's Rooms—Fielding, Quin, Mrs. Porter, Foote, Johnson, and Macklin—The Woffington and Garrick Part—Polly Woffington, Lord Tyrawley's Amour—George Anne Bellamy—Acting in a Barn—Captain Cholmondeley's Marriage—Violette the Dancer—Her Love for Garrick—Marriage—Peg Woffington goes to Covent Garden—Her Dublin Engagement . . . 122

CHAPTER IX.

Thomas Sheridan, the Manager—Letter to Garrick—Becomes a Manager—Conditions of the Playhouse—A Theatrical Riot and its Result—Dublin before the Union—Lionel, Duke of Dorset, at the Castle—Diversions of the Town—High Life and Low—Mrs. Butler, Miss Bellamy, and David Garrick—A Strange Love-Letter—Mrs. Butler's Present 151

CHAPTER X.

Peg Woffington in Dublin—A Command Night—Going to the Play—A Brilliant Audience—Some Irish Celebrities of the Period—'The only Theme in or out of the Theatre'—Mrs. Gunning and her Family—Miss Bellamy's Account of Them—Peg Woffington and the Gunnings—The Beauties go to London—Wooed and Wedded 180

CHAPTER XI.

A Second Dublin Season—The Acme of her Fame—The Beefsteak Club—The Sublime Society of Beefsteaks—Political Disturbances—The Tragedy of 'Mahomet'—Mr. Digges and the Audience—Sheridan's Address to his Company—Riot in the Playhouse—Sheridan's Address—Peg Woffington leaves Ireland 198

CHAPTER XII.

Diversions of the Polite World—My Lady Coventry—'A Little Lively sort of Fairy'—Masquerade at Somerset House—The Prince with the Pink Eyes—Juliet Disconcerted—The Player and the Peeress—A Scotch Venus—Lady Albemarle's Dream—Poor Lord Montford—General Braddock and Mrs. Upton—Entertainments Abound—Jack Spencer's Wedding 213

CHAPTER XIII.

Another Side of London Life—Men of Letters—The Poverty of Poets—The Ingenious Samuel Boyse—His Wretched Life and Miserable Death—Picture of a Poet—Richard Savage—A Man of Melancholy Aspect—A Noble Patron—An Author to be Let—The Volunteer Laureate—Striving to Live—Life in Bristol—Death in a Prison 226

CHAPTER XIV.

Goldsmith in London—Physician, Usher, and Hack Writer—The 'Monthly Review'—In Green Arbour Court—Beginning the World at Thirty-One—Letters to his Friends in Ireland—The Great City by Night—Johnson's Garret—Drinking Tea with Mrs. Williams—The Black Boy—The Philosopher's Appearance—Visiting with Mr. Joshua Reynolds—The Great Mr. Richardson—An Evening Walk with the Sage 248

CHAPTER XV.

Charles Macklin and his Tavern—The British Inquisition—Foote's most Excellent Wit—Macklin's Pupils—Foote as an Actor—The Diversions of the Morning—Drinking a Dish of Chocolate with the Wit—His Mimicry—Young Tate Wilkinson and Peg Woffington—Her Anger and Resentment—The Mimic Mimicked—Wilkinson, Foote, and Garrick—A Night at Drury Lane—The Mirror at Covent Garden—Rich, Foote, Garrick, and Wilkinson . . 271

CHAPTER XVI.

Spranger Barry—His *Début* in Dublin—Arrival in London—His Personal Beauty and Sweetness of Voice—Plays at Drury Lane—His Personation of Othello—Dissatisfied with Garrick—Goes to Covent Garden—The Rival Romeos—The Rival Juliets—Excitement of the Town—Tragedies Produced by Garrick—Monsieur Jean Noverre—The Chinese Festival—George II. at the Playhouse—His Impressions of Richard III.—Riot at Drury Lane . 306

CHAPTER XVII.

Peg Woffington's Last Years at Covent Garden—Her Famous Characters—The Comedy of 'The Careless Husband'—Introduction of a Scene from Real Life—Its Sparkling Dialogue—Its Plot and Characters—Peg Woffington as Lady Betty Modish—Opinion of an Anonymous Critic—Her Last Night—Cibber, Quin, Barry, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, and Lady Coventry—The Curtain Descends upon the Woffington's Life 328

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CHAPTER I.

The Little Water-carrier and the Foreign Lady—Madame Violante and Mrs. Woffington—Pupil to a Dancer—The Booth in Fowne's Court—Little Peg in 'The Beggars' Opera'—Charles Kelly and 'The Devil to Pay'—At the Aungier Street Playhouse—Dancing between the Acts—Playing Ophelia, Her Beauty and her Triumph—The Part of Phillis—Falling in Love—A Young Gentleman of Quality and his Ways—A Journey to London Town.

AT the close of an October day, in the year 1727, a child of about eight years old slowly tottered along Ormond Quay, Dublin, under the weight of a pitcher of water which she carried on her head. The evening had set in dark and cold, and promised a bleak and dreary night. Already the sky was overcast with heavy clouds; a sad-voiced north-east wind sweeping up the sluggish Liffey, carried with it a chill penetrating mist that gradually increased to drenching rain. Heavily-framed lamps, imprisoning the poor wan light of oil wicks, swung with many a creak from the corner houses of dreary streets and black-looking alleys; or hung above the old stone bridges with quaint and ponderous balustrades, and buttresses green and slimy from the ebb

and flow of countless tides, casting a patch of light upon the black waters beneath, as if seeking crimes and mysteries hidden in their depths. A few passengers, with heads bowed low, and cloaks and coats drawn tightly round them to avoid the bitter wind, hastened to and fro, shadow-like in the deepening gloom. A coach or two rattled with noisy haste over the uneven pavements. The bells of the church clocks rang out six, their sounds falling faint and changeful, like frightened voices crying for help from the heights of steeples and towers, upon which the vapour and cloud had already descended.

With the wind blowing in her face, the rain dashing on her scarcely covered limbs, the child, labouring under the weight of her pitcher, made but slow way. At last, shivering in her wet rags, and overcome by her misery, she burst into tears; raised her arms above her head, removed the pitcher, and sought the passing shelter of an open doorway. She had scarcely wiped the rain from her face with the remains of an old tattered and colourless shawl which helped to cover her shoulders, when a lady, who had for some time followed her, also sought protection in the hall, faintly lit by the flickering rays of a lamp.

'You are cold, my childe,' said the lady, looking at her keenly.

'Yes, ma'am,' said the girl, raising her eyes, expressive of surprise, to the stranger's face.

Even in her rags the child looked picturesque. Her dark, unkempt hair curled naturally round a well-shaped head, and hung above a wide, low forehead; her eyes, large and liquid, seemed almost black under the shadow of their long lashes, and the full sweeping curve of her brows; her cheeks were pale and beauti-

fully oval; her lips somewhat full and red; whilst her prettily dimpled chin gave a piquant look to the lower part of her face, which the sweet gravity of her eyes contradicted.

'And what is your name, my leetle childe?' said the lady in a voice to which a foreign accent gave a peculiar softness.

'Me name is Peg, ma'am,' said the girl, opening wide her eyes, made all the brighter by the tears which yet glistened in them.

'Peg; it is a pretty name. But is there no other?' asked the lady, pushing back the dark, tangled locks with a touch that was caressing in its gentleness.

'Peg Woffington, ma'am,' said the girl, pleased with the lady's attentions.

'And where you live, eh, leetle Peg Woffing-ton? Is it far from here, eh?' continued the foreign lady, letting her eyes wander from the child's handsome face to her limbs, rounded and shaped with wonderful grace.

'Not far, ma'am,' said Peg. 'Me mother lives in George's Court. She is a widee; an' she washes for the neighbours;' and so saying, she cast her eyes on the pitcher of water by her side, as if some train of thought had suddenly suggested itself to her mind. 'An' this is washing-day; an' I've been carryin' jugs o' water since dinner. But this is the last of 'em; an'—an' I must go now, ma'am; for there's no sign o' the rain stoppin', an' mother will be wonderin' what keeps me,' said Peg, stooping to raise her burden on her head once more.

'And I shall go with you,' said the lady, with that foreign accent which gave her voice so sweet a sound.

The child set the pitcher down again, straightened

herself, and looked at the lady with eyes expressive of wonder.

'I am,' said the lady, 'Madame Violante. You perhaps have heard my name?'

'What!' said Peg, in greater amazement now than ever; for at the mention of that name there rose before her a vision of a great booth in Fownes Court, with a vast glare of lights; where the sounds of fiddles and drums were heard strumming and beating right merry measures, and to which crowds flocked nightly, that they might see such tricks and daring feats as had never before been witnessed in this goodly city.

'And you are Madame 'Lante, that dances on the rope?' said Peg, looking down at the lady's feet, as if by her glance she would unravel the great mystery by which the celebrated dancer nightly balanced herself on a tight-rope and skipped upon a slack-wire above the heads of applauding crowds.

'The same,' said the French lady, smiling. 'Would you like to dance also on the rope——'

'And wear such beautiful dresses, with spangles?' interrupted this juvenile daughter of Eve. 'Oh, ma'am, I would be delighted!'

'Very well, I will teach you,' said Violante.

'And shall I wear a star on me forehead, ma'am, when I dance—like you?' she asked.

'Yes,' answered Madame Violante, 'if you learn quickly and well. But first we must ask your mother, and hear what she will say; show me the way to her house, and whilst we go you can tell me all about yourself, my childe.'

So Peg lifted the earthenware pitcher, that seemed now no heavier than a feather, and placed it on her shapely head, and went out into the darkness which

was almost as of night. Her steps were so light and quick that her new friend could scarcely keep pace with her; the rain and wind were unheeded, though the one pattered on her face, and the other sent the poor rags fluttering from her rounded limbs. Presently they left the exposed quays and turned up a dark narrow street, with high, black-looking houses on either side, in the friendly shelter of which the child, in answer to the French-woman's questions, told her that she and her mother and her little sister were as poor as church mice, since, said she, 'the doctors, the devil take 'em, killed me father when he had the faver a few years ago; an' sure, 'twas the first time in his life he ever had 'em to attend him, and 'twas his last. God be good to his sowl; but they say the doctors are never lucky, and they kill a mighty lot o' people anyhow. An' me mother,' she continued, 'takes in washin', an' works hard all day, an' at night she sells oranges outside the doors o' the playhouse in Aungier Street; an' never a much she makes be that same; an' as for meself, sometimes I sell oranges too, an' sallad for a ha'penny a dish, an' water-cresses in the sayson; and the young gentlemen in Trinity College behave dacent to me, an' often give me a penny for nothin' at all, only because I talk to them, an' make them laugh; an' they're not bad, poor fellows, anyhow, when they have the money; but sure there are times when they're just as poor as meself a'most, an' it's many a time I popped their clothes for them, comin' to the end o' the month, you know. But they're rale good-hearted, an' they like me well.'

At the end of this dark street they turned into a lane on the right, and finally entered an unsavoury court, lighted only by the dim rays of tallow candles shining through the small-paned windows of the surrounding

hovels. Quickly gliding into one of them, the child mounted a rickety stair, loudly calling out to her mother that a lady was coming to see her. At this information, a woman wearing a deep-bordered blowsy cap that had once been white, and a cotton gown, the sleeves of which were rolled to the shoulders, displaying her red and smoky arms fresh from the wash-tub, hastily took a candle from a tin sconce nailed to the white-washed wall, and rushing forward with it, held it above the creaking stairway in a position most favourable to the descent of melted tallow on her visitor's head.

'Walk in, ma'am, an' welcome,' said the hostess, foreseeing in her mind's eye an additional customer to the wash-tub. Restoring the candle to the sconce, she made a rush at the best chair the poor room contained, and rubbed it heartily with her apron, which she afterwards applied in the same manner to her perspiring face.

'An' won't you sit down, ma'am?' she continued, peering into the stranger's countenance through an atmosphere which was rendered a trifle misty by smoke from the turf fire, and steam from the wash-tub. 'Peg, stir the cradle and don't let Polly wake. Do you hear me?'

'Mother,' said Peg, feeling herself called on to make some introduction, 'it's Madame 'Lante,' adding, after a moment's pause, 'the lady that dances on the rope.' And so saying, the child made a curtsey, not without grace, to her visitor.

Being favoured with this introduction, the *danseuse* seated herself, and explained the motive of her visit. She had been struck by the beauty of Peg's face, and by the grace and bearing of her figure, and offered to take her as an apprentice and teach her the business of

a tight-rope dancer. The poor washerwoman dried her arms, opened her eyes very wide, and looked bewildered at the unexpected proposal which was so suddenly laid before her.

'It will be well for the leetle Peg; she will earn good salaries in a short times,' put in Madame Violante, 'and I will dress and support her.'

At this prospect a shrewd twinkle came into Mrs. Woffington's eyes. She knew the value of money.

'Well, ma'am,' she said, putting her arms akimbo, 'none of me blood has ever been play-actors, or ever danced upon a rope; an' for the matter o' that, me mother's people never disgraced themselves be earning a penny piece, but lived upon their own 'states like the highest in the land; an' sure, 'twas often tould us the head of the family was one o' the rale kings of Ireland himself. But sure, that was in the good owld times, and there's no use in talking o' them; and here am I, only a poor widee-woman, God help me, with two children to support, an' the times mighty hard, and me good man took from me with little or no warning, God help us! An' it's a miserable world we live in.'

'It was sad,' the sympathetic Frenchwoman said, taking advantage of a slight pause in the widow's autobiographical sketch.

'An' sure, every one knows, ma'am,' she continued, 'that you bear the character of an honest woman, an' not like most o' them wenches belonging to the play-house. An' sure as you say Peggy might earn a dacent livin' in a little while, an' that you will support and clothe the child, sure you may take her, an' I'll pray God to protect her,' said the washerwoman.

So it was settled that Peg was to become one of Madame's pupils; and in a little while, attired in long

drawers, short jacket, and flat pumps, she learned to dance and skip about the stage, and presently to sing songs; for all of which she was duly admired by the frequenters of the booth, who flung her showers of pence, which she quickly picked up and duly gave to her mother. But public taste is proverbially fickle. Although such surprising performances on the tight-rope as Madame Violante's had never been seen in Dublin before, yet there was a monotony about them which palled after a while, and by degrees the pleasant booth in Fownes Court, with its sconces of tallow lights, its fiddles, its drums, its merry dances, and its aerial performances, became deserted. Now Madame Violante was a woman of enterprise and energy, and no sooner did one attraction fail to fill her coffers than she quickly looked about her for another; and, like those who seek in earnest, she found it in good time.

But a little before all theatrical London had been in a state of intense excitement concerning a performance called 'The Beggars' Opera,' by the poet Gay. It had been produced by Rich, then manager of Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, and had been played for sixty-two consecutive nights, 'making Rich gay, and Gay rich.' The opera was furthermore notable as being the occasion of a drawn battle between George II. and her Grace the mad Duchess of Queensbury; which of course added to its notoriety considerably. Now this comic opera had never been heard or witnessed in Dublin, though the report of its sparkling dialogue, its genuine wit, and satirical ditties, had of course crossed the Channel. It therefore struck Madame Violante to form a company of children, instruct them in the parts of this opera, and have it performed in her booth. The idea was no sooner conceived than acted upon, and in

a little while the Dublin public was invited to witness the results of her training.

The principal character, Polly, was given to Peg Woffington; and strange to say, not only she, but almost all the children who personated the characters in this opera, afterwards became celebrated actors and actresses. Madame Violante, meanwhile, moved to a more commodious booth in George's Court, which, on the night of the first performance of 'The Beggars' Opera,' was prodigiously crowded. Amongst the audience sat a goodly number of Peg's old friends and admirers from Trinity College, who, when this lovely girl with the blue black hair and liquid eyes came forward, looking pale from fright, received her with an ovation that set her nervousness to flight, and gave her hope of much forbearance. The charm of her face, the beauty of her limbs, the natural grace of her movements would, if such were necessary, have compensated for much that was crude to a people ever keenly sensitive to the effects of physical gifts; but her crudities were scarcely perceptible, and when the curtain fell that night the young actress had the satisfaction of knowing that her first appearance in what may be called an important part gave promise of future success. In those old days and good, there existed a common feeling of friendship between performers and their audiences, which was productive of many advantages to both; and in accordance with the custom of the times, at the conclusion of the opera Madame Violante stepped forward from the world behind the scenes to receive the congratulations of her patrons on her financial success, as well as on the result of the training of her troupe.

Little Peg Woffington descended into the

commonplace world by means of a half-dozen creaking steps to receive her meed of praise, before joining her mother; who, hoarse from crying oranges at the door of the booth, was now awaiting her daughter, with her empty basket on her arm, a comfortable sense of proprietorship in her manner, and a glow of pride in her honest face—round, rubicund, and set in a framework of blowsy borders. Now amongst those who most warmly congratulated Peg and her patroness was Mr. Charles Coffey, a little, wiry, dark-complexioned man, who looked as if he were being half strangled by his high collar and many-folded cravat. His meagre frame was clad in a black body coat, his lower limbs in velvet breeches, fastened at the knee by rows of brass buttons and bows of black ribbon, and in worsted stockings that betrayed a lamentable lack of calf. For all that, it was easily seen Mr. Charles Coffey was a man of parts, and likewise of vast importance, for he was the composer of 'The Beggars' Wedding,' a ballad opera of great humour, which had met with prodigious success, if not in Dublin, at least in London, where it had been performed for thirty consecutive nights at the Haymarket, and had likewise held the boards of Covent Garden and the great Drury Lane playhouse itself. Moreover, he had likewise written, or rather plagiarized, a ballad farce rejoicing in the comprehensive title, 'The Devil to Pay,' which had also met with great applause at Drury Lane, and to which Miss Raftor (known afterwards as Kitty Clive) owed vast obligations, as it afforded her scope for the display of the comic talents which the world was not aware she possessed till then.

Now it pleased Mr. Charles Coffey to graciously offer to instruct Peg Woffington in the part of Nell in his new ballad farce, the character in which Kitty Raftor

had won her laurels. He had closely studied the Drury Lane actress, until her every whimsical movement and humorous expression were stamped on his mind; and these he was ready to teach Peggy, in order that his farce might meet a success in his native town, in which he was no prophet, such as it had already received in the greater capital.

At this proposal both Peg and her mistress were delighted; she was apt, studied hard, and made a sensation in the part when the ballad farce was duly produced in Madame Violante's canvas-covered booth. From this hour she was looked on as a prodigy, destined for renown some day, and was sought after by the polite circles of the town. From association with such society she, being imitative and impressionable, quickly learned to act in accordance with its genteel manners, just as she rapidly learned singing from Charles Coffey, and French from Madame Violante.

For a considerable time the charming Peggy acted small parts, sang ballads, and danced jigs under Madame Violante's management, but fate proving unkind to this lady, her business declined, and she was obliged to let her booth. But Peg's reputation as a clever and accomplished young actress had meanwhile risen, and her services were sought for by Elrington, then manager of the Theatre Royal, as the Aungier Street playhouse was called, where she sang in operas and farces, and danced with great grace between the acts, in company with Monsieur [illegible]oreau and Mr. William Delemain. It was not, ho[illegible]r, until February, 1737, that she was permitted to [illegible]e her appearance in what is known as 'a speaking c[illegible]racter.' The accident which gave her this chance wa[illegible]he same which has afforded similar opportunities to [illegible]any actresses who

have afterwards become known to fame. The play of 'Hamlet,' 'written by the famous Shakespeare,' was announced for performance at the Theatre Royal. Two days before that on which the tragedy was to be produced, the lady selected to play the part of Ophelia fell ill, when Peg came forward and offered to undertake the character. Elrington in return laughed at her proposal, but, nothing daunted, she offered to repeat some of Ophelia's lines for his benefit, the result being that Miss Woffington was announced in the bills to play the part of this woe-stricken heroine.

She had long ago become a favourite with the public, and the event of her making her appearance in this important character caused a vast excitement, to her patrons in particular, and the town in general. True to their natural characteristic love of display, the good citizens of Dublin were excessively fond of playhouses. On friendly personal terms with most of the actors and actresses, they were familiar with every event of their lives, and dealt out to them from pit and gallery their favour or displeasure, if with occasional indiscretion, at least with an openness that left no doubt as to their prejudices. Peg Woffington had been known to them from the days when she had sold salad and watercresses in the streets, and the town regarded her with especial favour; her appearance in so prominent a part as that of Ophelia was therefore looked forward to with unusual interest, and on the evening of the 17th of February the Aungier Street playhouse was crowded from pit to gallery to witness her performance. Seldom had there been seen so brilliant a house, or one more keenly, nay, anxiously attentive; and when at length Ophelia came forward, her dark eyes luminous with excitement, her beautiful face pale from fear, she held

her audience as by a spell, which the justness of her expression and grace of her manner heightened as the play proceeded. When the curtain descended on the mad scene, it was felt that she had secured a triumph which was not only complete in itself, but gave promise of great achievements in the future.

From this date she no longer danced between the acts, or sang ballads in small parts. It was her ambition to climb the ladder of theatrical fame, and once having gained a step, she was not the woman to descend to her former level. Her next important part was that of Phillis in Sir Richard Steele's 'Conscious Lovers,' and was almost as great a success as her representation of Ophelia. For two seasons she played leading parts, bringing large audiences and full coffers to the Aungier Street playhouse, gaining especial renown in the part of Sir Harry Wildair, an elegant young man of fashion. This character she had attempted at the desire of several persons of consequence, and so piquant and full of witchery was her personation of the fashionable rake, that she charmed the town to an uncommon degree.

About this time an event happened which may be considered the turning-point in her career: she fell in love. The object of her affection was a young gentleman of position but of small fortune, named Taaffe, the third son of a needy Irish peer. He was not only delighted with her talents as an actress, but fascinated by her beauty as a woman. He was a man well to look upon, tall and of goodly shape: with sea-blue eyes, light brown hair, and a smile as bright, if, alas! as deceptive as April sunshine. Night after night he sat in the boxes of the theatre, watching the play of her face that was more beautiful than health; the glamour of her

lustrous eyes; the smiles that played round a mouth like unto a cleft pomegranate; the turn of her head; the movement of her graceful limbs. When she left the stage, he felt as if sudden darkness had descended upon him. She was to him what sunlight is to the world. By day he wooed her with soft words and gentle looks, and many endearments, with all the passion, the longing, and the pain of his youth; for he thought to himself no woman ever was born so beautiful as she. And as a woman she loved him, not wisely, but too well; trusting him with the precious treasure of her honour, resting confident that because of her vast affection for him, he would in return make her his lawful wife. At his request she quitted the stage at a time when the promise of a great career shone before her; at his desire she left her native city to accompany him to London. For she loved him all in all.

CHAPTER II.

In Merry London Town—The King's Court and the Prince's—Views of the Streets—The Coffee-houses and their Frequenters—Round Covent Garden—The Players' Quarters and Clare Market—Laws Concerning the Playhouses and their Audiences—Dress of the Period—Johnson, Garrick, and Savage—At the Fountain Tavern—Visiting on 'Clean Shirt Day'—Reynolds, Pope, and Smollett—Quin at Drury Lane, Cibber at Covent Garden—Vauxhall, its Ways and its Visitors—With Lady Caroline Petersham—A Strange Advertisement.

WHEN Peg Woffington arrived in town, London was then, as it had been for the last quarter-of-a-century, the very centre of gaiety and dissipation. The nobility were divided in their allegiance between the Court of St. James, where George II., assisted by his German

mistress Madame Walmoden, created Countess of Yarmouth, held drawing-rooms twice a week; and Norfolk House, where Frederick, Prince of Wales, an outcast from the royal palace, had set up a court of his own, where he and his brilliant followers gambled and fiddled, and danced and acted almost every night throughout the year. The middle and lower classes made merry over rumours that reached them of the royal wrangles, but little heeding them, enjoyed themselves after their own fashion. The streets, with their steep-roofed, strangely-carved, curiously-gabled houses, crushing up against or over-lapping each other in front by a foot or two, or lying snugly against deep-windowed, square-towered churches, were bright and busy all day long; filled by a goodly crowd of courtiers and citizens, clad in many-coloured suits, all of whom were more or less known to each other, and exchanged salutations or civilities with a grace of movement and courtesy of speech lost to us in this latter day.

In the centre of the thoroughfares heavily-built coaches, showily painted, emblazoned with coats of arms or coronets, lumbered along; their slow way beset by carts, or by hired chairs swinging between abusive-tongued chairmen, or by the chairs of persons of quality carried by livery-clad servants. To add, moreover, to the general obstruction of the narrow streets, barrows of fruits, vegetables, and edibles lined either side, as if to mark where the pavements should have been. Over the pedestrian's head, from above the doorway of almost every shop, hung strangely-painted signboards, adorned with heraldic bearings, paintings of grotesque and fabulous animals, boars of many colours, or cocks in legion, all of which swung and creaked threateningly with every wind that swept from the four corners of the globe.

All day long and far into the night the coffee-houses, which were to be found in all quarters of the town, were crowded by men of every degree. Those whose tastes or vocations took them to St. James's or St. Paul's, alike used them as places for the interchange of polite conversation or the transaction of business. In these houses—the forerunners of clubs—the frequenters paid a penny or twopence, according to the situation and circumstance of the house, for a cup of good coffee, which sum likewise entitled the customer to read the broad-sheets of the day, to linger for an hour or so and hear the latest news from the court or the city, the newest gossip from abroad, or from the green-room of the Drury Lane playhouse; or to enter into a discussion on the political questions of the hour, the knavery of ministers, and the sycophancy of their followers.

There was 'Squire's Coffee-House,' a deep-coloured red-brick, picturesque building, adjoining 'Gray's Inn Gate,' which Sir Roger de Coverley himself used to frequent, in the first decade of the century; when seated at the upper end of the room, at a high table, he would call for a clean pipe, a paper of tobacco, a dish of coffee, a wax candle, and a newspaper, with such an air of good humour that everybody delighted in serving him. There was Button's famous coffee-house in Russell Street, Covent Garden, which Addison and his friends had frequented; where Sir Richard Steele told his wittiest story; where Dr. Garth uttered his best pun, and which had been made the receiving house for contributions to the *Guardian;* for which purpose a lion's head, designed by Hogarth, had been put up as a letter-box. And likewise 'St. James's Coffee-House,' in St. James's Street, where the Whigs gathered and talked politics, and arranged the affairs of Europe with

a satisfaction heightened by sundry pinches of Brazil snuff; the same house where Dean Swift—now dying in Ireland 'like a rat in a hole,' as he expressed it—had received his letters from poor broken-hearted Stella, under cover to Joseph Addison, Esquire. At the 'Grecian Coffee-House,' handsome Jemmy Maclaine, the celebrated highwayman, the son of an Irish dean, the brother of a Calvinist minister, might be seen any day, sipping his coffee, making love to his landlord's daughter, keeping an eye to his neighbour's property, and joining in the conversation with vast politeness, until one morning in May, 1750, when he was hung on the charge of stealing a laced waistcoat. In the open balcony at Toms' a great crowd of noblemen adorned with their stars and garters, and men of quality, might be seen nightly, drinking their tea and coffee, exposed to the crowd.

But the 'Bedford Coffee-House,' in Covent Garden, was more than all others at this period signalized as the emporium of wit, the seat of criticism, and the standard of taste. Here courtiers and citizens met on common ground; here, on the one hand, the price of stocks was gravely discussed, and on the other, Lord Chesterfield's last *bon mot* was laughingly repeated. No student from the universities launching himself on the world, no lawyer's clerk clapping on a sword, no haberdasher's 'prentice donning a cue wig, but duly put in an appearance at the 'Bedford' by way of qualifying himself as a man about town. In the little boxes, ranged round like hives, men of every calling sipped their coffee nightly, discussing the affairs of the day, exchanging witticisms, and narrating stories more laughable than edifying. And wittiest among them all, creating roars of laughter by his [illegible]ies, or his mimicry

of some well-known actor or politician, was a young gentleman of family and fortune, at this time a student of the Inner Temple. Dressed in a frock-suit of green, and silver lace, bag wig, sword, bouquet, and point ruffles, he frequented the place daily, until the carriage of some woman of quality would drive to the door, and, Mr. Samuel Foote being inquired for, he would hasten out, hat in hand, and ride away with his lady fair.

Covent Garden in those days was a busy hive, where not only coffee-houses, but gay taverns, and ordinaries, and houses of dissipation thickly clustered. At the ordinaries dinners were served at the rate of sixpence or a shilling per head; for the latter sum two courses being supplied, a goodly company, though somewhat mixed, gathering round the board. In each of these houses a second apartment was also set aside for the accommodation of the nobility and men of quality, where a higher tariff was charged, and where much wine and good was drunk. Here in this locality, which had long become the recognized rendezvous of most of the wits and men of parts, the players had their homes. Booth and Wilks had rendered Bow Street sacred in the memory of play-goers; and in this same street the ponderous Quin lived at this date. Betterton had resided in Russell Street, where Ryan now had his home; Colley Cibber dwelt in Charles Street; Macklin in St. James's Street; Mrs. Pritchard in Craven Street; Kitty Clive in Southampton Row; whilst the less famous actors and actresses lodged in the smaller streets branching from the Garden. They therefore met each other continually, and lived in a state of pleasant and friendly intercourse. Moreover, they could, at less than an hour's notice, be mustered together for rehearsal,

in case a sudden change in a play-bill required the introduction of a fresh piece.

But it was not the players alone who flocked together in those days; members of other callings and professions were apt to congregate in one spot likewise. Barristers and lawyers dwelt mostly in the Inns of Court, or about Westminster Hall; whilst the merchants and bankers lived in their warehouses or counting-houses in the city; few of them, and these only of the wealthiest, venturing to approach the West-end so near as Hatton Garden. Round Clare Market the butchers mustered in vast numbers. These brawny fellows were staunch friends of the players, to whom they were ever willing to give their services on occasions when disputes arose between them and the town, as was not infrequently the case; and on nights when young men of fashion, or gentlemen of the Inns of Court, or the 'prentices bold, threatened a riot in the playhouse on account of some supposed offence given them by manager or actor, or were determined on condemning an author's play unheard, the timely appearance of such formidable critics, stationed in various parts of the house, made a due impression upon the nerves of the would-be rioters.

The laws which held sway relative to the playhouses were curious, but in some ways excellent, being of quite a different complexion from those which obtain now-a-days. None but persons of rank, quality, or fortune ever presumed to sit in a box; nor did a man ever enter one with his head covered. The boxes were, moreover, sacred to virtue and decorum, except two or three on each side of the house, which were specially set aside for the women of the town. These were therefore visited by men at the peril of their characters. No

indifferent or vulgar person frequented the pit, which was occupied by men of letters or wit, by students of the Inns of Court, barristers or young merchants of rising eminence, all of whom were supposed to be well read in polite literature, and learned in dramatic lore. Their judgments were therefore considered worthy of vast regard, as being dictated by experience, taste, and learning. The players, as a consequence, courted their good opinions in preference to those of the occupants of any other part of the house. When the play was over the critics began to talk, mustering in knots in the lobbies of the theatre, or in the coffee-houses, especially the Bedford, where they delivered judgments according to their lights, which were received by the town without dissent.

On nights when some attraction brought a vast crowd to the house, an amphitheatre was reared at the back of the stage, where presently the spectators sat row upon row until the heads of those seated in high places touched the theatrical clouds. When this was filled, groups of ill-dressed lads sat in front of it, three or four rows deep, otherwise those behind could not have seen, and a riot would have ensued. Nor was this all; round the single entrance door at each side, the young gentlemen of fashion crowded in numbers, as this position gave them a delightful opportunity of displaying their handsomely dressed persons to the best advantage. Here they diverted themselves by staring, talking to each other across the stage during the performance, making audible and not very complimentary comments on the actors, or such people in the pit as attracted their notice, and served as a butt for their wit. Such conduct was generally resented by the galleries, when the angry gods, in their just wrath, rained down

on them showers of half-sucked oranges, half-eaten pippins, and unsound apples, to the infinite terror of those who sat in the pit and boxes.

The disadvantage under which this custom placed the poor players can scarcely be conceived. 'On a crowded night a performer could not step his foot with safety,' says Tate Wilkinson, 'lest he should thereby hurt or offend, or be thrown down amongst scores of idle tipsy apprentices.' Amongst such a crowd would some charming Juliet be discovered in the tomb scene of 'Romeo and Juliet,' arrayed in a full white satin dress with large hoop, then considered indispensable to the proper costume of this love-sick maiden; and with such a throng surrounding her bed would Desdemona bid her last farewell to the murderous Moor.

Sometimes, whilst the stage was so crowded, situations and scenes occurred in plays undreamt of by their authors. For instance, on one occasion, whilst an actor named Holland was playing Hamlet to a thronged house for his benefit, a ridiculous incident happened. When the ghost, with some difficult and many audible apologies, elbowed his way through the beaux, and appeared to this gentleman, his hat flew off his head; this being the recognized mode of conveying a hint that his hair stood on end, and of expressing fright generally. Presently, as he complained that the air bit shrewdly, and was very cold, a stout old lady with a compassionate heart and a red cloak, stepped down, unseen by him, from her seat in the amphitheatre, picked up his hat, and, coming behind him, placed it on his head, when poor Hamlet started in real terror. The house burst into roars of laughter, the ghost turned and fled, and Hamlet, after a moment's hesitation, followed him amidst ringing cheers. On another night it happened

that a certain noble earl, during the murder scene in Macbeth, lounged across the stage in order to chat with a friend of his whom he spied at the other side. Rich, the manager, duly incensed, declared he would never admit him on the stage again, to which the noble lord replied by giving him a blow in the face, which was duly returned by Rich, when a fracas commenced that extended itself to the whole house. Indeed, this custom of crowding the stage continued until 1762, when Garrick finally abolished it, to the vast indignation of the audience and performers; the former regarding it as an infringement on their rights, the latter as an injustice because of the decrease in the receipts of their benefits which ensued.

There were likewise unwritten laws regarding dress at this period, which were strictly adhered to; the merchant being recognizable by his broadcloth and worsted hose, from the man of quality habited in velvet, satin, and silk. Moreover, those living at a distance of sixty or a hundred miles from the capital, scarce ever ventured to make the journey to town; but when they did, the countryman was at once known by his suit of light grey or drab cloth, his slouched hat, and uncurled hair.

It was only a couple of years before the Woffington's arrival that Samuel Johnson, in company with young Davy Garrick, had travelled up to London to seek his fortune; when the philosopher in embryo had dined at 'The Pine Apple' in New Street, on a cut of meat for which he paid sixpence, and bread a penny; or had in sadder times gone breadless by day and bedless by night, wandering wearily when all the world was asleep, in company with Richard Savage, poet and vagabond, round lonely squares and through deserted streets, silent save

for the watchman's single-noted call, or the striking of many-toned clocks heard from towers and steeples lost in darkness, until with the dawn of a new day fresh hopes were born within them. But now Johnson, who has commenced to make way, might be seen in one of the boxes of 'The Fountain Tavern' in the Strand, reading with rumbling voice the ponderous speeches of his tragedy 'Irene,' to Mr. Peter Garrick; or sauntering on 'clean shirt day' to Salisbury Court to visit Mr. Samuel Richardson the printer, then unknown to fame; or to carry copy to the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Mr. Edward Cave, of St. John's Gate; a spot which Johnson first 'beheld with reverence,' as the source from which so much polite knowledge sprang. Cave, a rough, gruff fellow enough, who possessed a warm heart, was surrounded by a crowd of hack writers, anxious to pen a sonnet or satire, essay or article, at the nod of their great chief. As an intellectual luxury, he had promised Johnson a sight of the mighty geniuses who presided over the fortunes of his magazine; and subsequently introduced him to them as they sat among the clouds, not of Olympus, but of tobacco smoke ascending from their pipes, in an ale-house in Clerkenwell.

Fielding, who had not at this time written a line of his novels, but who was of good repute as a dramatist, might be seen loitering in the shop of his brother playwright, Robert Dodsley, who had once been a footman in the Lowther family and had now become a poet, dramatist, and publisher.

'You know how decent, humble, inoffensive a creature Dodsley is—how little apt to forget or disguise his having been a footman,' writes Horace Walpole, the magnificent. The Muses, it would seem, had visited the worthy Dodsley whilst he wore [redacted] shoulder-knot, and the first

volume of his poems were very appropriately entitled, 'The Muse in Livery.' These verses were fortunate enough to attract the attention of Pope, who, as the saying is, took him by the hand, and established him as a bookseller. In turn, Dodsley was one of the first to practically recognize Johnson's worth as a poet by giving him ten guineas for 'London, a Poem in imitation of the third Satire of Juvenal'; which 'happy offspring of his muse' had previously gone the rounds of the booksellers, and had been rejected by them. He had likewise helped Johnson by giving him a guinea now and then for paragraphs written for the *London Chronicle*, at a time when guineas were most welcome guests to the philosopher's palm.

In this pleasant shop, situated in Pall Mall, might be seen many of the celebrities of the day; amongst others a thin-faced, shrunken-limbed little gentleman, slightly bent, and clad in sober black, who was no other than Mr. Pope of Twickenham. Here also came for many an hour's pleasant gossip a remarkable-looking man, pale-faced, and with thoughtful eyes, Edward Young, who had not then written his 'Night Thoughts,' but who had given Drury Lane a couple of tragedies which met with but little appreciation. And with him occasionally came a young man, a doctor's apprentice, Tobias George Smollett, who eight years later was to become famous as the author of 'The Adventures of Roderick Random,' but who at this period, when he came to take a friendly pinch of snuff from Dodsley's box, and listen to the polite conversation of the men of parts who visited him, had merely written a tragedy which had been rejected by the managers of the Drury Lane and Covent Garden playhouses. Here, too, came young Mr. Arne, the upholsterer's son, the brother of the frail and beautiful

actress, Susanna Maria Cibber. Mr. Arne—a slight, trim man, light of foot and easy of carriage, who dressed in black velvet even in the dog days—posed as a wit and a scholar, and had just then distinguished himself by setting Milton's 'Comus' to music.

Peg Woffington and her lover arrived in the early part of the summer, when the theatrical season proper was almost over, and the actors and actresses taking their annual benefits. At Drury Lane Mr. Quin was playing Julius Cæsar, 'with the death of Brutus and Cassius,' followed by the 'Virgin Unmasked,' in which saucy Kitty Clive played one of her favourite characters —Miss Lucy. At Covent Garden 'The Rehearsal' was being played for Mr. Cibber's benefit, with 'an epilogue written by Jo. Haines, comedian, of facetious memory, to be spoken by Mr. Cibber riding on an ass; followed by a hornpipe by a gentleman in the character of a sailor.' A pantomime entertainment, rejoicing in the suggestive title of 'The Columbine Courtezan,' was given nightly at Punch's Theatre, adjoining the Tennis Court in St. James's Street; and instead of the usual operatic performances at the Haymarket Theatre, assemblies were held weekly, 'to commence at nine, and no sooner,' to which the gay part of the town flocked in large numbers.

Now that the long evenings and warm nights were at hand, the Marylebone Gardens threw wide their gates, and gave entertainments of music, when 'the nobility and gentry are admitted for sixpence each;' and Vauxhall put forth all its gay allurements.

On these calm bright evenings in early summer the placid Thames was crowded by boats and barges, hung with bright bunting, and laden with gay companies of citizens on their way to Vauxhall Gardens, which had

then no rival; Ranelagh not being opened till April, 1742. In the far-stretching gardens of Vauxhall were woods, open swards, picturesque vistas, tents, booths, and a platform for dancers, all of which were at night 'made illustrious by a thousand lights finely disposed.' In the glades, under the shade of spreading trees, walked gentlemen in silken hose and silver-buckled shoes, their rich-coloured velvet coats distended in the skirts by cane or buckram; their padded breasts covered by bright-hued satin waistcoats, wide flapped and embroidered with gold or silver lace; their jewelled hands half covered by point lace ruffles smelling of orange water; their powdered wigs surmounted by three-cornered hats; and by their sides walked ladies of quality, powdered and patched, high-heeled, low-bodiced, and wide-skirted. In the pavilions at either side of the grove, which were divided into different departments, and adorned by pictures and portraits by Hayman, from designs by Hogarth himself, sat various companies, not only of men and women of quality, but of goodly citizens in worsted hose and square-toed shoes, and coats of honest broadcloth, who, with their buxom spouses and families, enjoyed themselves merrily enough; for here, as Boswell says, 'was good eating and drinking for those who chose to purchase that regale.'

In the centre of the grove stood a vast orchestra, where bands played, and 'concerts of musick' were given nightly; and at either side of which stood statues of Mr. Handel as Orpheus playing the lyre, Roubiliac's first work in England, and of John Milton, the latter being cast in lead, and painted stone colour. Vauxhall had been opened by Mr. Thomas Tyres, a man who had been bred to the law, which he soon forsook; for, having a vivacious temper and an eccentric mind, he 'ran

about the world with a pleasant carelessness, amusing everybody,' as Johnson's biographer says. In opening Vauxhall Gardens, Tyres stated in his advertisements that he was 'merely ambitious of obliging the polite and worthy part of the town,' and charged a shilling simply 'to keep away such as were not fit to mix with those persons of quality, ladies and gentlemen, and others,' who should honour him with their company.

The gardens, from the convenience they afforded, soon became, as may be readily supposed, remarkable as a place of intrigue, a fact that did not in the least prevent others bent on more innocent enjoyment from frequenting them. To the diversions called Ridotti al Fresco, given here, most of the company went wearing masks and dominos, and wrapping their figures in ample cloaks, lawyer's gowns, and such articles of apparel as served for disguise. These ridotti commenced at about eight o'clock in the evening, and ended usually at four in the morning. They were extremely popular, and so prodigious a number of coaches and chairs crossed Westminster Bridge *en route* for the gardens, from the polite part of the town, on nights when a ridotto was held, that an attempt to cross that thoroughfare oftentimes proved dangerous to limb and life. In the vicinity of Vauxhall, order was sought to be preserved by a hundred soldiers, whilst the way from there to town was patrolled by stout fellows well armed, and paid by Tyres to protect the properties and lives of his patrons.

Horace Walpole pleasantly discourses of a journey he made to Vauxhall, in company with Lady Caroline Petersham and Miss Ashe, with whom indeed her ladyship had broke but a little while before, but again took under her protection, upon the assurance of Miss Ashe that she 'was as good as married' to Mr. Wortley

Montagu, Lady Mary's son; a gentleman alike remarkable for the number of his amours and his snuff-boxes. When Walpole arrived he found the ladies 'had just finished their last layer of red, and looked as handsome as crimson could make them.' The party also numbered Lord March, Harry Vane, the Duke of Kingston, pretty Miss Beauclerc and Miss Sparre. As they sauntered down the Mall—a merry group of bright-coloured ladies, and powdered and perfumed gentlemen—Lady Caroline met her lord, who strode by them on the outside and repassed them again without a word. At the end of the Mall, my lady called him, but he would not hear; when she gave a familiar spring, and, between laughing and confusion, called out to him, 'My lord, my lord! Why, you don't see us.' Then the remainder of the party advanced, feeling somewhat awkward and anxious, for my lord did not love his lady, and Lady Caroline said, 'Do you go with us, or are you going anywhere else?' to which her lord and master made answer, 'I don't go with you, I am going somewhere else!' and quickly marched away. Not the less merry for his departure, they got into a barge, a boat with a company playing French horns attending them, as they floated down the tide; when they debarked, who should they meet but my Lord Granby, who reeled out of 'Jenny's Whim,'—a tavern at the end of the wooden bridge at Chelsea—as drunk as may be, and who, of course, accompanied them on their merry way; when he took occasion to propose to Miss Sparre, that they should shut themselves up for three weeks merely to rail at the world. Then they entered the Gardens and selected a box, in front of which Lady Caroline sat, looking dangerously handsome. Learning that my Lord Oxford was in a neighbouring box, she

sent for him to mince chickens; when seven of those unhappy fowls were minced into a china dish, which her hospitable ladyship stewed over a lamp, with three pats of butter, and a flagon of water, stirring and rattling and laughing till the company expected to have the dish about their ears every moment. My lady had brought Betty, the famous fruit girl, who, in her turn, brought hampers of strawberries and cherries; and Betty waited on this excellent company, and then sat down at a little table beside them, and enjoyed her share of the good things of this life. Such jokes, and puns, and repartee—sometimes a little broad, it is true—never were heard; such wit fell from their lips, such laughter rippled all round them, that they soon had the whole attention of the garden, and crowds gathered about their box, till Harry Vane took up a bumper and drank their healths, and then proceeded to treat them with greater freedom, when they dispersed.

Mention of Vauxhall is continually made in the newspapers of the day, in connection with the announcements of its *fêtes*, the people who had visited it, and sometimes with strange advertisements, one of which, strongly illustrative of the times, runs: 'Lost in the dark walk at Vauxhall last week, two female reputations; one had a small speck, on account of some dirt previously thrown at it; the other never soiled. Whoever will bring them back to their owners shall receive five thousand pounds with thanks.'

CHAPTER III.

A Faithless Lover—Fortune-hunting—News of a Marriage—Hatred and Vengeance—Peg Woffington's Plot—Young Mr. Adair—The Ridotto at Vauxhall Gardens—Miss Dallaway and her Friends—A Scene—Reproaches—A Lover's Departure.

SUCH was London town when Peg Woffington and young Taaffe took up their residence in York Street, Covent Garden. For a few brief months all went well with them; the actress was delighted with the infinite attractions and novelties of the capital, and her lover rejoiced that she was happy.

But by degrees, slow, but deadly sure, came the inevitable reaction of a passion not founded on unselfish affection; and the man who had sworn that he loved her more than life itself, and that his love for her would outlive his life, already grew cold in his ardour. For days and weeks he was absent from her side. But she who had given him her heart loved him still, and was loath to admit that her affection was no longer returned; and by all those charming arts, which the intuition of a woman of fine feelings teaches her to employ in inspiring or retaining a love that is dear to her, she strove to win him back once more. For a time it seemed as if she had succeeded; to his carelessness ensued a tenderness that had in it something of self-reproach. At last there came a day when he announced that urgent business affairs in connection with his property obliged him to leave town for Ireland, but he hoped to return in three weeks at the latest. And then followed many protestations of affection, which even she felt came rather from the lips than from the heart; for the old light was missing from his sea-blue eyes, and the sound of his voice rang false.

He had scarcely gone a week, when it reached her ears that he had been playing her false; that he had been wooing a young lady of quality and fortune, named Miss Dallaway, who was heiress to considerable wealth. Moreover, his attentions to this young lady had proved so agreeable, that she had promised to wed him on his return to town. At this news, the Woffington was by turn astonished, incredulous, and furious; but recovering from the first condition, she took pains to ascertain that the rumour was undoubtedly true. Then the scales fell from her eyes, and she saw that the idol she had blindly worshipped had not a heart of gold, as she had foolishly imagined, but of base clay, made very much after the pattern of the best of mankind. She was not jealous of the woman he had asked to marry him, probably for the sake of her money; but she was heart-sore for loss of his love, indignant at the deception practised on her, and humiliated at the prospect of being flung aside, at the mere dictates of his caprice and convenience. Brooding over her wrongs, all her love for him turned to hatred and contempt; she was a woman scorned, and she was determined to have vengeance.

It was not until she had thought for long and sorrowful days, that she at last hit upon a plan of obtaining her vengeance; but this, when once determined on, she, with the impetuous spirit which was so strong a trait of her character, did not hesitate to carry out. Knowing the name of the lady to whom her lover had proposed marriage, it was a matter of but slight difficulty to become acquainted with her by sight; for being a woman of quality and fashion, she attended all the polite assemblies and entertainments of the town. The next step that the Woffington resolved on, was to

meet her, obtain an introduction to her, and reveal to her that the man she had promised to wed was the lover of an Irish actress. Thoughts of the sore pain and deep humiliation which this might cause Miss Dallaway did not prevent the Woffington from carrying out her plans; this woman of fashion could not love him as she, the Woffington, had loved him, with all the depth and force of her demonstrative Celtic nature, quick, subtle, and passionate; and if she had suffered from his perfidy, why not this other woman likewise? It was but just! She must strike at him, though her shaft pierced another heart.

Remembering how successfully she had played the part of Sir Harry Wildair on the stage, she now resolved in order to carry out her plans more successfully, to act the part of a young man of fashion in real life; and assuming male attire, she so successfully disguised herself, that even those who had seen her take her part in the Dublin theatre, could not recognize her as Mr. Adair, a young Irishman of family and fortune; the name and character she now assumed. Attired in silken hose and satin breeches, with broidered waistcoat and wide flapped coat, powdered, painted, and bewigged, she sallied forth upon the town, a perfect specimen of the impertinent, dainty, and effeminate coxcombs of the period. Everywhere Miss Dallaway went, the Woffington was, if possible, present; in the park before dinner, where the lady was sure to take the air; in the theatre at night, where the lady sat in her box; and to such assemblies as were open to the public for payment, where the lady was most likely to attend. Moreover, the Woffington always took care that Miss Dallaway should notice her appearance, and occasionally ventured to give such signs of admiration, and indications

of a smitten heart as were permissible by look and gesture.

But all the while, the Woffington found it impossible to obtain the desired introduction; without which she dared not, in her character as a gallant, address the lady. At length fate granted her desire one night, when they were present at a public ridotto in Vauxhall Gardens. When the Woffington, otherwise Mr. Adair, entered the grounds, the scene which presented itself was one of vast brilliancy and gaiety. In the orchestra a full band was discoursing the liveliest airs imaginable; coloured lamps glittered amidst the thick-leafed branches of oak and linden, that formed an arch-like roof above the central walk of the grove; the pavilions were filled with brightly-clad figures; dancers glided to and fro upon the platform; laughter rang in the air; and everywhere were men and women in masks, dominos, uniforms, or fancy costumes, busy in the pursuit of enjoyment; and all as merry as might be.

Amongst those Mr. Adair walked with a swaggering gait, swinging his gold-nobbed clouded cane, with its great bunch of silken tassels, to and fro, as if his heart were as light as a feather; a smile on his lips, a civil speech on his tongue, a glitter in his eye that might indicate love or mischief. At last he caught sight of the figure for which he had been diligently in search. Surrounded by a group of friends, Miss Dallaway sat under a tree, watching the crowds pass and repass; now and then making some comment which showed she was not devoid of wit. Approaching the little knot with the easiest and most careless air in the world, Mr. Adair recognized at a glance a certain man of quality with whom he had during the week exchanged civilities, whilst dining at the more select ordinary of the

'Bedford,' and with whom, on one occasion, he had cracked a bottle of port. Advancing to him, he assumed his most courteous air, made a bow which carried its credentials for good breeding in its every movement, and spoke a vastly civil speech. The man of quality was not behindhand in courtesy; and presently young Adair, making a polite reference to Miss Dallaway, the man of quality offered to introduce his new friend to her.

'For,' said he, 'you must know, the young lady has a partiality for your country, having given the strongest possible proof of it, by consenting to wed one of your genial-hearted race.'

'Indeed,' said Mr. Adair. 'The young lady confers an honour on us all by her choice; all the more so from her condescending to overlook the worth and parts of those by whom she is at present surrounded.'

When the elaborate bows which succeeded this speech were made, and the gentlemen had assumed their erect figures once more, Mr. Adair was presented to Miss Dallaway, a young gentlewoman of scarcely more than eighteen summers, beautiful in features, dazzlingly fair, blue-eyed, and with an expression of innocence and trust that quickly won its way to the heart. At the introduction, Mr. Adair slowly removed his hat, and placing it, with a gesture perfect in gracefulness, over the region of his heart, bowed almost to the ground whilst the lady, first rising from her seat, seemed gradually and gently to sink amidst billows of lace and satin, as she courtesyed low in return.

'Madam,' said Mr. Adair, in a voice which, though a trifle harsh, had in its undertone a ring which attracted its hearer, 'this day shall henceforth be reckoned amongst the happiest in my life.'

'Sir,' said the lady, 'you are in truth vastly polite

and raising her eyes to his, she encountered a glance, the fascination of which few men had found it possible to resist.

'Madam,' said this pretty gentleman, 'when the truth is spoken concerning you it must ever seem polite; for with such a theme, no tongue could discourse inelegantly.'

The lady bowed once more and opened her jewelled fan, which she raised to her face in order to conceal the smile of pleasure that played about her lips.

'You have a knack, sir,' she said, 'of turning pretty compliments.'

'Yes, madam,' quoth he, 'when inspired by beauty and worth; for compliments are the due tributes to such qualities.' And so saying the gallant gentleman tapped a tiny gold box, helped himself with an air of satisfaction to snuff, and taking out his daintily scented handkerchief, lightly brushed a few grains which had fallen on the costly lace of his ruffles.

By degrees Miss Dallaway's friends gave way to the new-comer, whose easy grace and vast courtesy seemed to find ready favour in her eyes. Mr. Adair, seeing his advantage, quickly followed it up; he was anxious to speak to her in a more sequestered spot, in order to expose the villainy of the man she had promised to wed. Therefore he said to her, as soon as the opportunity offered,

'The crowd here to-night is prodigious, madam, in faith we have around us a mixed lot. You will find it more agreeable in the grove, I have no doubt; may I do myself the honour of offering you my arm?'

And so saying, he led the way down the central walk of the grove, with its star-like lights and its fragrant odours. By degrees, and as it seemed, by accident,

they outstepped their friends; for the crowd through which they moved being great, they were soon separated from her; an advantage which was quickly followed up by the young gentleman proposing that they should turn down one of the paths to the right, inasmuch that it was far more agreeable by reason of its silence and seclusion.

'I believe sir, by your conversation, that you live in town,' said the lady, laying her hand on his arm as lightly as might be.

'At present, yes, madam,' says he. 'I have, however, been here but a few short months, having arrived in the spring from—from one of the universities.'

'Young gentlemen are taught many things there,' says she.

'Yes, madam,' replies he with a wicked smile, 'in the one from which I came they learned many things—from me.'

'From you, sir!' stealing a glance at him.

'That is, I taught them some very pretty manners—I have always been famed for my manners.'

'Of that I have no doubt, sir,' replied the lady.

'But alas, madam,' the gentleman said with a sigh, 'I find that I have come to town too late.'

He felt as if he were playing a part; the habit of acting, difficult to lay aside even in serious moments, was now strong upon him; the gardens with their lights and music were but a stage; the surroundings but theatrical accessories; and the purport for which he had donned this disguise, and sallied forth upon the town for the last week, but the plot of a comedy. And yet it was all real, terribly real, and under the bravery of that broidered satin waistcoat beat a woman's heart that was sick from grief, yet strong for revenge.

'Too late? May I venture to inquire why you say so?' said Miss Dallaway.

'If I only dared to tell her,' said the gentleman, in that undertone called on the stage an aside, which, though quite audible, is supposed to be unheard. Then he added, in a louder though more desponding tone, 'Too late, madam, to secure my own happiness.'

'How do you mean?' queried Miss Dallaway, who seemed to conceive a sudden interest in the cause of his distress.

'When I came to town,' said he, lifting his eyes to hers, and catching a look of pleasure which promised a deeper concern in his affairs, 'I heard the name of Miss Dallaway on every tongue. In the coffee-houses it was spoken with respectful admiration, in all polite assemblies with unmeasured praise. Everywhere her beauties and qualities were vastly lauded, until I grew impatient to see the object of such general esteem. But when at last good fortune permitted me to see her—when I saw you, madam, I knew that all I had heard had not done justice to your perfections; I saw that your merits were as far superior to the compliments which every tongue had uttered, as glorious day is to the darkness of night; as heaven itself is to this poor earth.'

'Oh! sir,' said the lady, blushing, 'you overwhelm me.'

'Nay, madam,' said the gallant, 'I speak but the naked truth. But with the knowledge of your perfections, came also the news that you had given your love, your life, to the keeping of one who had been happy enough to find favour in your eyes.'

'That is true, sir,' said the lady, as if the fact had been suddenly recalled to her, and recalled without pleasure; 'he—he is a gentleman of worth,' she added.

'If he were indeed one likely to render you happy, madam,' said the gallant, 'I would never have sought this interview to-night.'

'What do you mean, sir?' said Miss Dallaway, with a change of tone that indicated both surprise and displeasure.

'I mean,' he answered, boldly, 'that he is unworthy of your esteem and love; that, in fact, madam, he is a worthless fellow and a profligate.'

'It is false,' she said, indignantly, removing her hand from her companion's arm. 'This is a charge trumped up to blacken his character in my eyes, an unworthy trick to ingratiate yourself in my favour; but, clever as you are, sir, it shall not succeed.'

'Upon my honour, madam, it is true,' said Mr. Adair very quietly. 'I see you love him too, and I grieve indeed to pain you—in truth I do; but this gentleman is well known, as I have recently learned, for his gallantries. Nay, bear with me whilst I tell you, that even while he made love to you from mercenary motives, he was carrying on an affair with an actress whom he brought to town from Ireland.'

'An actress?' she gasped, pale now, and trembling all over. Then, the colour coming back into her cheeks, she cried out, 'I'll not believe it; it cannot be possible that the man who swore he loved me—loved me better than all the world besides, loved me for myself alone—is false to me. Take back your words; say they are untrue, the trick of a rival in a war of love—or' (with a change of tone no longer pleading, but commanding) 'produce me proof that your words are true.'

'Madam,' said the Woffington, for it was no longer the man of fashion, but the woman who now spoke, 'I cannot take back my words; but, as it may be well for

you to know this man, I will show you proof that what I have said is true.' And she drew out a bundle of letters, some of them of recent date, some of them well worn because often read. 'You know the writing?'

The young lady fixed her eyes on them for a second, d nodded her head.

'Then read them,' said the Woffington.

In her haste, Miss Dallaway almost tore the squarely-lded sheets of paper bearing Taaffe's seal, and his aracters addressed to Mrs. Margaret Woffington, and ad line after line that spoke of love and faithfulness this actress, until the letters seemed to burn them-lves into her brain; then the music of the band fell nter and fainter on her ears, her head swam, and, with ow cry, she tottered forward, and would have fallen, t that Peg Woffington caught her in her outstretched ns. The place was quite solitary; no one had wit-nessed this scene. With an effort Peg Woffington lifted he insensible girl to a bench close by, fanned her face, and chafed her hands.

'Poor girl,' she said, 'I did not think she loved him so! What fools we women are!' Tears sprang into her eyes, and, bending down her head, she kissed the girl's forehead with tenderness. 'Did you know me, you would shrink from the touch of my lips,' she said, almost in a whisper, and again she kissed her with the love of a sister.

In a little while the young lady opened her eyes, and, looking round her, remembered all.

'My child,' said the Woffington, tenderly, forgetting completely the character she assumed, 'I have caused you some pain, but from suffering good often springs. It is best that you should know the man to whom you were about to trust the happiness of your whole life

as he really is. When next a man pleads to you, have more care regarding his character before you give him the treasure of your love.'

'You have saved me,' said the girl. 'I loved him, and now—now——'

'You see he is unworthy of you. My task has bee after all, an ungracious one;. and when I undertook I had no thought for the trouble it might bring y Forgive me.'

'Then it was not to save me you told me this?' sa Miss Dallaway, wonderingly.

'No; it was to punish him for his deception to— one very near to me,' said the Woffington; her chee were burning.

'In any case, I owe you thanks,' said the young la while tears almost choked her voice. 'Your words kind; surely, ah! surely your heart must be good.'

'Good? If you knew me, you would not say so, said the Woffington. Then she hesitated just for a second; longing, in obedience to some sudden impulse, to throw off the character she had assumed, and reveal herself; yet fearing to lose the regard which she had gained, and dreading the dislike and distrust which she knew her name must call up. Suddenly resuming her former air of a coxcomb, she therefore laughed airily and said, 'Madam, believe me, I am no better than my neighbours.'

Miss Dallaway rose up, puzzled by the contradictions in manner and tone which this young man's manner betrayed.

'Let us seek my friends,' she said. 'I'm sure they have missed me.'

She held out her hand, which the Woffington too in both of hers and raised it to her lips, not with affecte

gallantry, but in honest pity. Then arm in arm, and without exchanging another word, they went forth mongst the crowd.

The first light of a summer day had crept into the y before the Woffington reached her lodgings in York reet, Covent Garden. In obedience to the loud mmons of one of her chairmen, the door was quickly ened, not by a servant, but by her lover, who had st returned. She started for a moment in surprise; en, getting out of her chair, she quickly passed him d entered the house, leaving him to wrangle with e chairmen. Passing into the sitting-room, she flung her dainty gold-laced hat and powdered wig, loosened cravat, undid her sword, cast it from her on the r impatiently, and then sat down in a great chair to ait his coming. Her mood had changed. The manner he man about town had vanished completely; the of reckless audacity had given place to the weari- ss of reaction; the scene in which she had so cleverly nacted a part, now affected her in an unlooked-for egree, and filled her with bitter self-reproach.'

'Well, Peggy,' said Taaffe, entering the room with blithe air, 'have you no word of welcome for me, fter coming back to you four days sooner than I xpected?'

'I am tired,' she answered, shortly, without looking t him.

Her face was white and haggard seen by this early ght; there was a dangerous glitter in her dark eyes, defiant air in her bearing.

'Ah, I see,' said he, with a short laugh. 'You have een out amusing yourself at your old stage tricks ain, and donning the breeches.'

Coming over to where she was, he sat down beside

her, and stretched out his arms as if to caress her, with such tenderness as was his wont in the first days of their courtship. The same light was in his sea-bl eyes, the same smile on his lips which had first dazz her, filled her heart with a torrent of happiness, made her weigh the world light in the balance of l love. But now she saw only the weakness, deceptic and cruelty of his nature reflected in his eyes a playing on his lips, and she shrank from him.

'Don't touch me,' she said, in a tone such as he h never heard her use before. He did not dare to disob her.

'Why,' said he, 'it's in mighty bad temper you a you don't seem to have got much diversion out of y night.'

'I have got none,' she answered him, briefly.

'It's sorry I am for it,' he said, conciliatingly. 'A may I ask where you have been?'

'You may, for I intended telling you. Though may act many parts, I cannot play the hypocrite lik you.' This time she looked him in the face.

'What the devil do you mean by that civil speech asked the gentleman, beginning to comprehend h humour.

'I mean,' she answered, 'that I have seen Mi Dallaway, the woman you promised to marry, and have told her all.'

'Good God!' cried he, nervously grasping hold his chair. 'Is this a part of your play-acting, or it true? Answer me at once——'

'It is true,' she replied, unflinchingly meeting t look of horror that crept into his face.

'You are a devil!' he almost hissed from betwe his clenched teeth.

'I am a woman,' she said, rising to her feet, and throwing back her finely-turned head with so sudden a gesture, that her long black hair fell in a lustrous wave upon her shoulders—'I am a woman, and you have deceived me. I loved you with all my heart, and you played me false. You swore fidelity to me, and then came to whisper the same words in the ear of another of your flattering speeches and soft ways. All the love I once bore you turned to hate, and I determined to expose you as the liar and hypocrite that you are.'

Her eyes flashed, her breasts heaved with passion, her face flushed with the crimson of indignation. She was beautiful; but the man before her thought only of the injury she had done him. His anger blinded him to the loveliness that had once fascinated him, and he rose up and cursed her.

'Tell me what you have done,' he gasped, seeing it was better for him to know the worst at once, 'what you have said to her.'

'I have told her that you are a profligate,' she said, looking at him steadily. 'I have told her that even the last you spoke words of love to her, you were carrying on an affair with—with an actress you had brought with you from Ireland.'

The words came as if wrenched from her.

'She will not believe you,' he said, catching at some straw by which he might yet be saved.

'I have taken care that she shall. I have shown her your letters to me,' she answered.

'Good God! I am undone,' he cried out in despair. 'Do you know that you have ruined me? My affairs are going to the devil. She is an heiress; I was to have married her in a couple of weeks, and her fortune would have saved me. You have destroyed me.'

Woman-like, she began to relent. He strode up and down the room with uneven steps; his face pale as death, his brows knitted in anger, his lips twitch from the passion of his despair.

'I only know,' she answered back, with strongly posed calmness, 'that you have deceived me. It enough for me.'

'You—you are a tigress,' he replied, hoarse rage.; and snatching up his cloak and hat, he ru out of the room and out of the house without ano word, nay, even without once looking back at her.

For a moment she stood motionless, listening to quick sound of his feet echoing down the lonely st in the early morning hour. Even then she knew she would never again see this man whom she loved so well, whom she, alas! yet loved, despite wrongs and her rage. Even then she felt that had turned over one of the brightest pages of her that something had gone from her existence which could never again recover. Then a dull sense of mi and unutterable loneliness descended on her; and a passionate movement, she flung herself on a co and burying her face in her hands, sobbed as if heart were breaking.

CHAPTER IV.

Rich, Manager of Covent Garden—His First Pantomime—His reatment of Dramatic Authors—The Woffington Interview with m—Sensation in the Town—Actors at Covent Garden—Ryan's agedy in Real Life—Theophilus Cibber—Peg Woffington's First ppearance in London—An Old-fashioned Comedy—Surprise and dmiration of the Town—Sir Harry Wildair—All the Town in ove with her.

WOFFINGTON was not a woman to sit down idly break her heart because of a lover's perfidy. rally energetic, she delighted in work, and happily her generation of playgoers, now resolved to offer services for the coming season to John Rich, had eight years previously built Covent Garden atre, of which he was now manager. Rich was a inent character in his day; remarkable for his ntricities, and famous as being the first to introduce form of entertainment now known as pantomime England. In common justice to his memory, ust be borne in mind that his productions were of r more refined and intelligible order than these h obtain at the present day. His first attempt is direction was the representation of a story from 's 'Metamorphoses,' which by the aid of magnificent es, glittering habits, charming dances, together music and singing, he made wonderfully attractive e town. Between the acts of this serious repre- tion, he interwove a comic fable, which was chiefly led on the courtship of his beautiful columbine the heroic harlequin—a character it was the great ht of his life to represent. In this performance a ty of the most surprising adventures and tricks produced by the mere wave of a magic wand: ges and huts were transformed into palaces all

aglitter with silver and gold; men and women were turned in the twinkling of an eye into trees and stone· vast gardens sprung from the earth; and such thi happened as had never before been witnessed by playgoing world. The result was a complete succe

Rich was the son of a gentleman, but was w illiterate; this being probably due to some negle his education, for by the invention of his patomi he proved himself to be a man of imagination ability. The treatment of his harlequin likewise sho that he possessed the innate refinement of good br ing. His 'Catching the Butterfly' was declared by chronicles of his times to be a most wonderful perfo ance; whilst his harlequin, hatched from an egg by heat of the sun, proved such an attraction that cro waited for admission under the piazza of Covent Ga from mid-day, and threatened to break down the d of the playhouse if they were not admitted at t o'clock, at least two hours before the entertain commenced. This performance was said to be a ma piece of dumb show, for Rich's harlequin never utt a word, yet such was the power he exhibited by gestures and expressions, that he not only prov laughter, but drew tears. Jackson, speaking of last-mentioned pantomime, says of Rich, or rathe the harlequin, 'from the first chipping of the egg receiving of motion, his feeling of the ground, his st ing upright, to his quick harlequin trip round empty shell, through the whole progression, every had its tongue, and every motion a voice, which s with the most miraculous organ to the understand and sensations of the observers.'

Rich's success was such that his example was qu followed; and Drury Lane and the minor houses i

duced harlequinades, in order to draw full audiences. o important indeed did the character of harlequin come, that he was played by such clever and accomhed actors as Woodward, O'Brien, Yates, and even rick himself, on an occasion when the regular harlen of Goodman's Fields playhouse was taken suddenly this being of course before he attempted the part Richard the Third in the same theatre. By degrees harlequinade became vulgarized, and we read of one hose entertainments presented at the last-mentioned se which greatly took the town. This was called Hint to the Theatre, or Merlin in Labour; with Birth, Adventures, Execution, and Restoration of rlequin, by Mr. Devoto.' The bills announcing this ted that, as the manager had put himself to great ense in getting the machinery made 'to the neatest fection,' he hoped to be favoured with 'the company the curious.' Accordingly the curious and others ked to witness the performance in great numbers.

Perhaps it was the success of his dumb shows which ped Rich to cherish a fine contempt in his managerial l for his contemporary play-writers, whom he sorely rieved. When these children of the muses sent him ir manuscripts, Rich flung them into the deep drawer a cabinet, where they lay for months. Presently, en the aspirants for fame timidly approached him, l asked him, with bated breath, for tidings of their l-blooded tragedies, or farcical comedies, the manager uld coolly inform them he did not know which plays re theirs, but they might go to the deep drawer of cabinet and take their choice, for he wanted none them. This little peculiarity of his got him into uble, on one occasion at least. It happened that a lical man, 'calling himself Sir John Hill,' left a

manuscript play of his, entitled 'Orpheus,' with Rich or rather with that gentleman's maid-servant. Of cours it shared the fate, alas, common to its kind; the mana never untying even the outer covering. In due ti Mr. Rich announced the performance at his theatre play called Orpheus, which, 'though done by a differ hand,' the doctor insisted on claiming as his prope Subsequently a war of words followed, in which whole town took part. Then he who called himself John Hill published his 'Orpheus,' in the preface which he stated his case according to his lights. T was quickly followed by a pamphlet bearing the co prehensive title, 'Mr. Rich's answer to the many falsit and calumnies advanced by Mr. John Hill, Apothecar which in turn elicited another 'Answer to the m Plain and Notorious *Lyes* advanced by Mr. John Ri Harlequin,' and so this paper war raged quite bris for many months.

For all this, Rich was, like most of those followi the same calling, a good-hearted fellow enough; testimony of which statement a story is told of behaviour to a poor man who fell from the gall to the pit of Covent Garden, whilst witnessing so strange escapades of the harlequin. When the m was picked up, his bones were found to be broken many places; learning which, Rich had him carefu tended, employing for the purpose the best medi skill of the town. A few months later, the poor fell came to thank the manager for his kindness, when R said to him, in his most serious manner,

'Well, my man, you must never try to come into pit in that fashion again; and to prevent it, I'll g you free admission to that part of the house as long I live.'

[redacted]e residence of John Rich, situated in the then [redacted]shionable quarter of Bloomsbury Square, the [redacted]n betook herself, and demanded an interview [redacted]centric manager; but, as she refused to give [redacted]she found this was no easy matter to obtain. [redacted]to John Galt, she paid no less than nineteen [redacted]s before she was admitted. At last she told the [redacted]ant to say Miss Woffington desired to speak with Rich; when the man returned with a thousand l speeches and apologies, and informing her that his ster would see her at once, showed her into his ate apartment. Entering the room, she found the nager lounging on a sofa, a book in one hand, a a cup, from which he occasionally sipped tea, in her, whilst around him were seven and twenty cats, ged in the various occupations of staring at him, ng his tea-cup, eating the toast from his mouth, king round his shoulders, and frisking about him n the freedom of long-standing pets.

The fame of Peg Woffington's achievements in the blin playhouse had crossed the Channel, and made manager willing to entertain her proposal of playing his theatre during the following season. A salary of e pounds a week was offered her, which she accepted lingly enough, and an engagement was then entered o, when it was decided that she should make her bow to the English public in the following vember, as Sylvia in George Farquhar's comedy, ie Recruiting Officer.'

The rumour that this new actress, who had the rare une to be appreciated in her own country, and whose nty was, moreover, reputed to be little less than that goddess, was about to play at Covent Garden, made st sensation in the town. She was, on this her first

appearance, to play the leading character, and supported by two actors who were popular f Ryan and Theophilus Cibber; players both, w quently acted with her for years. Ryan, the Irish tailor, had, when he and the century we teens, played in 'Macbeth' with the famous on which most memorable occasion he, as Seyton, worn a tremendous, full-bottomed wig, which alm smothered him. From that day he had laboured w such effect in his profession, that Addison had selec him to play Marcus, in his great, long-winded trag of 'Cato'; and Garrick in after years confessed t this actor's Richard III. was a performance after wh he had shaped his own. His fame as a tragedian not indeed confined to the stage, for he had killed man in real life, surrounded by such common-p effects as a tavern furnished.

It happened one summer evening, as early as year 1718, that after his performance in the Linco Inn Fields playhouse, he had gone to sup quietly the 'Sun' in Long Acre; and for the purpose of be more at his ease, he had taken off his sword, and pla it in the window. But as fate would have it, sca had he laid by his weapon, when in struts, with most rakish air imaginable, a famous bravado nam Kelly, whose chief diversion it was to pick quarrels w strangers, in taverns and coffee-houses; and then upon them with preconceived malice and wound th bodily, he being an excellent swordsman. On present occasion, being flushed with wine and full bravery, he approached Ryan, who was quietly sitt at a far table, and, first daring him to fight him subsequently made passes at him which meant dea harm; the actor, therefore, rushed for his sword.

this Kelly seemed mightily diverted, and made thrusts at him afresh; whereon Ryan, in self-protection, skilfully ran a sword through the body of his assailant, who in another second lay stark upon the tavern floor, his sword grasped tight in his stiff right hand, his life's blood oozing on the sand. The town was delighted [illegible] d expression to get rid of this troublesome fellow, Ryan in consequence rose in popular favour. d, such a hold did he take on the public that, subsequently he was set on in mistake whilst ning home late at night, and received a wound e cheek that made his voice sound sharp and his audiences completely overlooked this defect, never moved him from the warmth of their favour. Theophilus Cibber, son of old Colley, who was to the part of Plume in 'The Recruiting Officer' on Woffington's first appearance, had made that cha-er a special study, and had been instructed in it by father. Theo Cibber, as he was most frequently d, had 'a person far from pleasing, and the features is face were rather disgusting,' as David Erskine er, Esquire, quaintly informs us. Theophilus ber had from early in his career developed what was wn as 'a fondness for indulgences'; in other words, was a scapegrace of the first water, as will presently een. But he had a good understanding, a quickness arts, a perfect knowledge of the characters he sented, and a certain amount of vivacity occasion-amounting to *effronterie*, which combined to make an actor agreeable to the town. He had been, it be noted, the original George Barnwell in the dy of that title. Now, this play preached a moral, n, though a rare thing enough in those days, was means acceptable to the public; in consequence

of which, it was usual to introduce an epilogue at the end, which ridiculed, broadly of course, all the virtuous and beautiful sentiments gone before. To heighten the fun and give it a sharper relish, this was spoken by Mrs. Cibber, who, smartly and with little disguise, satirized her husband's vices (for he had many, 'twas said) and excused her own, which were indeed the common property of the town. To render the occasion of Woffington's first appearance the more impo Rich bespoke the favour of the presence of Fred Prince of Wales and his Princess; and as *His* H Highness was always anxious to be diverted graciously promised to be present.

The play-bill announcing the performance ran follows:

COVENT GARDEN.

By command of His Royal Highness the PRINCE OF WALE

By the Company of Comedians,
AT THE THEATRE ROYAL IN COVENT GARDEN,
This day will be presented a Comedy, call'd

THE RECRUITING OFFICER,

WRITTEN BY THE LATE MR. FARQUHAR.

The part of SYLVIA by MISS WOFFINGTON
(Being the first time of her performing on that Stage).

WITH DANCING

By MON. DESNOYER and SIGNORA BARBERINI,
ALSO
By MON. and MADEMOISELLE MECHEL
(The French Boy and Girl).

To which by command will be added a Tragi-Comi-Pasto Farce of Two Acts, call'd

THE WHAT D'YE CALL IT.

Box, 5s.; Pit, 3s.; First Gallery, 2s.; Upper Gallery
To begin exactly at Six o'clock.

On the evening of the 6th of November, 1740, at the hour of six o'clock, a brilliant and crowded audience had assembled in Covent Garden Theatre. In the royal box, 'under a canopy of scarlet silk, most richly adorned with gold tissue and tassels of the same,' sat the Prince and Princess of Wales; and in the boxes [illegible]d them, the gay and witty courtiers who had [illegible]d their backs on St. James's, to frisk, flatter, [illegible]le, and enjoy themselves in the light of the rising [illegible]who never, alas, for him and them, reached the [illegible]ian of his power. In the pit, as usual, sat the [illegible]nts of the Inns of Court, the men about town, the [illegible]g fellows from the Universities, with their periwigs, [illegible]rds, ruffles, and snuff-boxes; glib compliments on [illegible]ir lips, merry twinkles in their eyes: and much [illegible]wledge of stage affairs in their heads: by which [illegible]y would presently, over a glass of wine, try this Irish [illegible]ress, and pronounce judgment upon her. Presently, [illegible]en the fiddles had played their last long-drawn [illegible]es, and the candles forming the footlights had been [illegible]iciously snuffed, up went the heavy green curtain; [illegible]n a silence fell upon the house, broken only by [illegible] fluttering of fans and the snapping of snuff-box [illegible].

[illegible]The Recruiting Officer,' a comedy with which the [illegible]ffington's name is closely connected, and in which [illegible] continued to divert the town for years, had from its [illegible]y action, spirited dialogue, and rather broad fun, [illegible]n long a standing favourite with playgoers.

[illegible]oreover, 'twas said to be true to life, and, indeed, [illegible]ves an excellent picture of the manners and ways [illegible]he times. George Farquhar had been himself a [illegible]iting officer at Shrewsbury, where the scene is [illegible] and where he wrote the play; and it was said he

had drawn his own character in that of Captain Plume, 'a rakehelly officer,' who is the hero of the comedy. The heroine, Sylvia, daughter of worthy Justice Ballance, is a young gentlewoman full of dash and spirit, as may be gathered from the autobiographical details, with which, in the first act, she is kind enough to favour her cousin Melinda, who remarks that she, S[redacted] has the 'constitution of an horse!' Says Sylv[redacted] reply,

'So far as to be troubled with neither spleen, c[redacted] nor vapours; I need no salts for my stomach, no [redacted] horn for my head, nor wash for my complexion. [redacted] gallop all the morning after the hunting-horn, and [redacted] the evening after a fiddle. In short, I can do everythi[redacted] with my father but drink, and shoot flying; and [redacted] sure I could do everything my mother could, were [redacted] put to the trial.'

Then Melinda informs her that her captain has co[redacted] to town.

'Ah, Melinda,' says she, 'now that he is come [redacted] take care he shan't go without a companion.'

'You are certainly mad, cousin,' replies the other.

'And there's a pleasure sure in being mad, wh[redacted] none but madmen know,' quotes she.

Then says Melinda, 'Thou poor romantic Quix[redacted] hast thou the vanity to imagine that a young sprigl[redacted] officer, that rambles o'er half the globe in half a y[redacted] can confine his thoughts to the little daughter o[redacted] country justice in an obscure part of the world?'

'Psha!' replies Sylvia, 'what care I for his thougl[redacted] I should not like a man with confined thoughts [redacted] shows a narrowness of soul. Constancy is but a [redacted] sleepy quality at best; they will hardly admit it an[redacted] the manly virtues, nor do I think it deserves a p[redacted]

with bravery, knowledge, policy, justice, and some other qualities that are proper to that noble sex. In short, Melinda, I think a petticoat a mighty simple thing, and I am heartily tired of my sex.'

She is, of course, in love with Captain Plume, a gentleman of parts, who describes himself as having [redacted] constant to fifteen at a time, but never melan- for one.' As by the death of her brother she in for fifteen hundred a year, old Justice Ballance not approve of Captain Plume as an heir to his and family, tells her she must think no more of and bids her take coach and go into the country. is command she promises to obey, but in the third t she turns up in the apparel of a beau, and enters the scene whilst Plume and Brazen—a very Cæsar ong women, and a recruiting officer likewise—are ding conversation.

Save ye, save ye, gentlemen!' says she.

My dear, I'm yours,' says Brazen, an impudent ow, in truth.

Do you know the gentleman?' asks Plume.

No, but I will presently,' says the other; and then turns to the pretty young gentleman. 'Your name, dear?' says he.

Wilful,' says Sylvia, quite cute—'Jack Wilful, at r service.'

What, the Kentish Wilfuls, or those of Stafford- e?' asks Captain Brazen.

Both, sir, both; I'm related to all the Wilfuls in ope, and I'm the head of the family at present.'

Do you live in the country, sir?' asks Plume, who, urse, does not recognize her in this disguise which has assumed.

Yes, sir,' says she. 'I live where I stand; I have

neither house, home, nor habitation beyond this spot of ground.'

'What are you, sir?' queries Brazen.

'A rake,' says she, plainly enough.

'In the army, I presume?' says Plume.

'No, but I intend to 'list immediately. Look'[illegible] gentlemen, he that bids the fairest has me.'

Then they both bid for this recruit; says B[illegible] 'Sir, I'll prefer you; I'll make you a corpor[illegible] minute.'

'Corporal!' says Plume—'I'll make you my [illegible] panion; you shall eat with me.'

'You shall drink with me,' says Brazen.

'You shall lie with me, you young rogue,' says Plum[illegible]

'You shall receive your pay and do no duty,' sa[illegible] the other, bidding yet higher.

'Then,' says Sylvia, 'you must make me a fie[illegible] officer.'

This latter little joke was one which the audie[illegible] invariably received with great relish. Presently Sylv[illegible] who does not just yet enlist with either of these galla[illegible] gentlemen, objects to Plume's too friendly advan[illegible] towards a certain Rose, a young market-woman; [illegible] the captain assures her on this delicate point, for sa[illegible] he, philosophically enough, it must be admitted,

'The women, you know, are the loadstones eve[illegible] where; gain the wives, and you are caressed by [illegible] husbands; please the mistress, and you are valued [illegible] the gallants; secure an interest with the finest wo[illegible] at Court, and you procure the favour of the grea[illegible] men; so kiss the prettiest wenches, and you are sec[illegible] of 'listing the lustiest fellows.'

Finally Sylvia is discovered through wearing a sui[illegible] clothes belonging to her late brother, is forgiven by

father, married to the man she loves, and all ends as happily as may be.

Now for weeks previous the town was anxious to see the Woffington in this favourite character, the representation of which required so much spirit and vivacity; [illegible]d when, on the night of her first appearance, she was, [illegible]he second scene of the first act, discovered in an [illegible]ment, her mere appearance won upon the audience, [illegible]ained her a hearty round of applause. Slightly [illegible] the middle height, her figure had a symmetry [illegible]flexibility which lent a natural grace to her every [illegible]vement; whilst her luminous eyes, beautiful com[illegible]exion, slightly aquiline nose, and tender lips, com[illegible]eted a picture that charmed even to fascination. [illegible]en the ease of her manner, the justness of her [illegible]stures, the rapt expression of her face that seemed [illegible] reflect her speech, rendered her such an actress as [illegible]d not been seen for years. Her playing, indeed, was [illegible]ture, and not art. To those present it seemed that up [illegible]this hour wooden-limbed, painted-faced puppets had [illegible]tted mechanically across the stage, uttering speeches [illegible]t lost their point, and became limp and dull on falling [illegible]n their lips; but now, such is the effect of genius, [illegible] mere presence amongst them seemed to endow [illegible]m with souls, and transform them from marionettes [illegible]nen and women with hearts and human passions.

[illegible]resently, when this charming woman came on the [illegible]ge in the apparel of a pretty gentleman about town, [illegible]a red coat, a sword, a hat *bien trouffée*, a martial [illegible]t in his cravat, a fierce knot in his periwig, a cane [illegible]ging from his button, the effect was marvellous. [illegible] air was at once graceful and rakish; her delivery [illegible] and pointed; the witchery of her glances was [illegible]ounced inimitable. There were no two opinions

regarding her, pronounced in the coffee-houses that night; for all admitted that the satisfaction she afforded was beyond expression. By desire, 'The Recruiting Officer' was repeated for three nights running; a by no means inconsiderable compliment to the actress's powers in those days, when a fresh play was as a rule perform nightly. Her praise quickly reached the Court, the Duke of Cumberland, and the Princesses A Caroline, and Louisa bespoke a play in which sh to appear: to wit, 'The Double Gallant,' or the Lady's Cure.' This was the occasion of her ei appearance, and she was much applauded in the ch racter she represented, that of Lady Sadlife. Subs quently she played Aura in 'The Country Lasses'; a on the 21st of November, she appeared, 'by particul desire,' for the first time in London, as Sir Har Wildair in the comedy of 'The Constant Couple, or Trip to the Jubilee,' by Farquhar.

Sir Harry Wildair was a character scarce second favour to Sylvia with the town; both having that da and brilliancy which suited the complexion of the tim Sir Harry was a spark just come from France, and v at once the joy of the playhouses, and the life of park. He was brave and gay; a gentleman of ha circumstances; a plentiful estate, and a genteel edu tion, which left him as free from rigidness in his mo as his constitution rendered him liberal in his pleasu His humorous gaiety and the freedom of his behavi —airy after the fashion of the times, yet tempered w honour—are skilfully portrayed in the series of love adventures which constitute the comedy. part had been first played by Wilks, who had s claims to be considered a man of quality, and who h the representation of men about town his special st

So clever was his personation of Sir Harry, that it set him above the competition of all other actors of his time, and gained him that praise due to his great merit. Farquhar said that, when the stage had the misfortune to lose him, Sir Harry might go to the ——Jubilee. And since Wilks had taken his exit from world's stage (now almost ten years ago) no other een found to play the part with justness and spirit. attempt of this new actress was therefore looked ith eager curiosity by the public, and with some rehension by her friends; feelings that, on her earance, were changed to admiration and delight. the well-bred rake of quality, who lightly tripped oss the stage, singing a blithe song, and followed by o footmen, there was no trace of the woman. The lience beheld only a young man of faultless figure, tinguished by an ease of manner, polish of address, l nonchalance that at once surprised and fascinated m. Seldom had a player in one night attained such cess. 'So infinitely did she surpass expectation,' says e Wilkinson, in his memoirs, 'that the applause she ived was beyond any at that time ever known. An ant figure, she looked and acted Sir Harry Wildair h such spirit and deportment, that she gave flat con- iction to what Farquhar asserted—that when Wilks Sir Harry might go to the——Jubilee.' Her ess became the conversation of every polite circle, ell as in every tavern and coffee-house in town, from Paul's to St. James's; and so crowded were the es it drew, that the part was repeated for twenty cutive nights—a fact significantly marking her ph and establishing her favour.

e subsequently played during the season Elvira he 'Spanish Fryar'; Violante in the 'Double

Falsehood'; Laetitia in Congreve's 'Old Batchelor'; Amanda in Cibber's 'Love's Last Shift'; and Phillis in Steele's 'Conscious Lovers.' In all of these she was successful; for, aware that the public was a patron worth pleasing, she took infinite pains in all that concern her profession; made up with great care and judgm suitable to the part; committed her lines to mi practice that did not always obtain in her day strove to realize the author's ideal in the charact assumed. Her reward came quickly, in the appreci freely awarded her. She was installed as a favou in the public mind, a position she retained during bright, brief career. Praise of her rare beauty—a v help to such talents as hers—was likewise on ev tongue; the poets penned sonnets to her; the pri sellers sold her portraits; and as Conway wrote Walpole of her, in this her first season, 'All the to is in love with her.'

CHAPTER V.

Peg Woffington's Engagement at Drury Lane—Kitty Clive, her Pas for Tragedy—Delane the Student of T. C. D.—Macklin and Adventures—The Turning-point of his Career—His Wond Shylock—What Mr. Pope said—Young David Garrick—His Life at Lichfield—Becomes a Wine Merchant—Among the C at the Bedford—Hesitates to go on the Stage—Falls in Love Peg Woffington—In the Green-room at Drury Lane—Sir Ch Hanbury Williams—The Woffington's Definition of an Age.

TOWARDS the end of the season—in May, 1741,— Woffington ceased to act in the Covent Garden house, owing to a disagreement with Rich; and o 19th of the month the following quaint advertise appeared in the *London Daily Post:*

'Covent Garden.—Whereas, some persons princi

concerned in the Play of the Rehearsal, &c. being indisposed, is the reason the same cannot be performed [illegible] Advertised in Saturday and Yesterday's Bills; on [illegible] account the Company are obliged to take this [illegible]thod of returning Thanks to the Town for all their [illegible]urs, and humbly take their Leave till next Season.'

[illegible] months later, at the commencement of the [illegible]season, she appeared as Sylvia on the boards [illegible] Lane Theatre, of which Fleetwood was then [illegible] Mrs. Pritchard, an excellent actress, who [illegible]previous season played the leading parts at [illegible]e, now went over to Covent Garden, where [illegible]d to play the part of Sylvia; but as her [illegible]th l[illegible] in the representation of tragic heroines, [illegible]d [illegible]n the applause which invariably attended [illegible]s personation of that favourite character. [illegible]y Lane there was a strong company this [illegible]on, which numbered amongst its ladies Kitty Clive, [illegible]. Butler, and Mrs. Bennet, whilst the male element represented by Theo Cibber, Macklin, Delane, Mild, and Raftor. Quin was at this time playing in [illegible]blin and the Irish provinces.

Kitty Clive, plain of face, warm of temper, sharp of [illegible]ue, was pleased to regard the Woffington as her [illegible]l. Kitty had made her *début* as a page in 'Mithris King of Pontus' in the Drury Lane playhouse, [illegible]t the same time as Peg Woffington made her first [illegible] to the audience assembled in Madame Violante's [illegible]h; but Kitty was then in her seventeenth year, [illegible]st Peggy had but reached her tenth. This page [illegible]h the youthful Kitty represented was not quite a [illegible] creature, with no better task than supporting a [illegible] or carrying a cup; but had a song to sing proper [illegible]e circumstances of the scene, which was received

with extraordinary applause. But from pages in silken hose, velvet jerkin, and feathered cap, she gradually worked her way to better parts. She had once by her singing forced a reluctant audience to give a hearing to Colly Cibber's 'Love in a Riddle,' a favour denied to His Gracious Majesty of the following night; she ha likewise been called 'a charming little devil' by of the pretty fellows in the stage-box; and pres she laid claims to be considered a great comic ac by her bright, blithesome rendering of Nell, i 'Devil to Pay,' a ballad farce of Coffey's, as well her representation of singing chambermaids (cha maids always sung in those days), hoydens, romp vulgar fine ladies.

But she who had been styled 'a charming little de possessed a soul that loftily soared above comedy, the sublime regions of tragedy; and her greatest deli in life was to play such parts as Ophelia, Desdemo and Portia. Under her treatment these charact were little less than burlesques, especially when, in trial scene, she, as Portia, introduced comic busin and mimicked to the life the famous Lord Mansfi whose peculiarities were the laughing-stock of town. Kitty was altogether a person of vast impo ance; she was the daughter of an Irish gentlem one William Raftor, a native of the city of Kilke who had been bred to the law, and whose property been forfeited to the Crown, by reason of his hav followed the fortunes of James the Second, and fou on the side of that unhappy monarch at the fan Battle of the Boyne. Moreover, she had marri brother of Baron Clive, and was the friend of Ho Walpole, who was in himself a gentleman of the hig quality, and a patron of all the arts. Though

her husband soon after her marriage, no scandal then, or throughout her career, was ched to her name. According to Arthur e was 'a diamond of the first water,' but, mond, she could cut deeply, for her tongue el; and frequently she would aim one of speeches at this new actress, who had in one ed the fame which it had taken her, the rs to establish; which speeches the Woffing- return in kind, but with a charming coolness her hot-tempered rival furious. In all her Kitty was loyally supported by her brother Raftor, a very indifferent actor, but a genuine n, who had the characteristic talent of telling rous story, and turning a pretty compliment nderful ease.

n the ranks of the Drury Lane company the ton had a more friendly face turned towards that of young Delane, the son of an Irish gentle- o had been a student at Trinity College when l sold oranges and watercresses to the 'college nd entertained them with her wit. His friends stined him for the Church, but the stage had ttractions for him than the pulpit, and, to their e disgust, he became a player. In the same year he Woffington appeared as the pupil of Madame te, he was engaged at the Aungier Street Theatre rington. Singularly handsome, with a graceful and a full-toned voice, he had the principal ements which constitute a good actor. For three he played in Dublin, at the end of which time e most of his countrymen then and now, was ed by the more liberal rewards held out to lent e sister country, and came to London. His first

engagement was at the Goodman's Fields Theatre, but he subsequently enlisted under Fleetwood's management, and played the romantic heroes at Drury Lane.

Charles Macklin, another member of the company was also a countryman of the Woffington's, and s became her friend. A lineal descendant of an J king, a runaway 'prentice of an Irish saddler, he been in his day a strolling player; had acted H and harlequin the same night; had passed as a v and a vagabond, played in barns, had starved houseless, and had strutted his brief hour in a at Southwark Fair. He had been known in his days as 'the wild Irishman,' and had been 'Wicked Charley.' Being a bohemian by nat profession, his adventures were many, curio amusing; and, when he became garrulous in age, the narration of these used to afford him a friends much diversion. Amongst other stori used to tell that he and merry Dick Ashby, sipated fellow enough, the son of a Dublin ma went into a gambling-house by way of having a one night, when he, Macklin, won over a hun guineas, a sum that seemed to him inexhaust Accordingly next day he and his friend, attended two ladies of the town, went down to St. Alba take the air, and enjoy the pleasures of the co One night this gay little party went to a publi and, being very expensively dressed, they pass people of condition, until one of the ladies, gettin a dispute concerning the priority of place in a c dance, her language and temper discovered he fession; when she and her companion were l out of the room, and the gentlemen received a that it was desirable for them to follow.

But at this time, when Woffington joined the Drury
e company, Macklin was in the meridian of life.
had sown his wild oats, had married and settled
and had proved himself a very useful actor. He
layed such characters as Touchstone in 'As You
t,' and Sir Francis Wronghead in 'The Provoked
,' with great success; but he had at heart a
sire to play another character more important
ese. So one day he summoned courage to
Fleetwood, the manager, to allow him to act
in 'The Merchant of Venice' for just one
He had long studied the character, and on his
tation of the Jew, he was satisfied to let his
n rest for ever. After some persuasion, the
consented, to Macklin's vast delight; and
erchant of Venice,' 'written by Shakespeare,'
eedily announced for performance. In order to
the play more palatable to the public, it was
th that the part of Lorenzo would be played by
owe, 'in which will be introduced songs proper to
ay, with entertainments of dancing by Signor and
ra Fansau, viz. Le Genereux Corsair, with cloaths
ecorations entirely new.' The bills furthermore
that, 'as no money will be taken for the future
the scenes, 'tis hop'd that none will take it ill
n't be admitted there.'

, heretofore, the character of the Jew had been
as a low comedy part by all actors; nay, even
lebrated Doggett had played it in the style of a
arce. But Macklin was resolved to depart from
litions, and, for one night at least, to present the
a serious character. Rumour of this resolution
got abroad, the company generally regarded it as
; but finding that Macklin was serious in his

determination, they requested the manager to n
him give up a part, his playing of which would
disgrace on them all. Fleetwood fled in constern
to Macklin, who merely said he would pledge his
the success of the play. What his intended tre
of the Jew really was, none could tell; for
rehearsal he merely spoke his lines in an u
unaccompanied by gestures. But those who
play with him entertained many fears concer
representation; especially when it was remembe
Rich had once dismissed him for not declai
the stilted orthodox manner, when he played a
part, and had treated it 'too familiarly,' to
phrase of the harlequin manager. If he
departed from the beaten track, what might h
now with the comical Jew? There was no kno

At last the eventful night arrived on which
was satisfied to rest his future theatrical repu
Kitty Clive was cast for her favourite part as
the Woffington as Nerissa, and Delane for the Mer
When Macklin made his appearance in the green
dressed for the part, he wore a piqued beard, a
black gown tied with a coloured sash, and a re
for, as he subsequently explained to Pope, he ha
that Jews in Italy, especially in Venice, wore
that colour. Moreover, his face was carefully p
and the lines on his brow and cheeks well m
Those in the green-room stared at him with
There was no trace of the comic element
Hebrew. Their worst fears were now confirmed.

'Look at his face,' whispered one of them.

'Why,' says another, 'if Almighty God w
legible hand, Macklin must be a villain.'

Then out spoke Kitty Clive, who was already

Portia, and expected to create great mirth in that
: 'Sure,' says she, 'no one ever saw such a Jew.'
id you expect to see him wear a couple of hats,
rry a bag on his back, ma'am?' asks the Woff-
with an air of innocent curiosity.
Peggy, no more than I expected to see him
n orange basket on his arm,' replies the smart-
lady, turning quickly away.
while, Macklin nervously paced the room, mutter-
lines in an undertone, until Delane, coming in,
ed that the house was crowded from top to
whereon the Jew went on the stage, and look-
ugh a slit in the curtain, saw the news was
felt gratified. The two front rows of the pit
eady crowded with critics, wearing the air of
o had come to pass a highly diverting evening.
,' said Macklin, with his eye at the slit, 'I shall
d to-night by a special jury.' His heart sank;
e wise, after all, in his determination of playing
w as a serious character? His whole future as a
depended on this night. As he turned away in
s impatience, he felt a hand placed gently on his
nd looking up, encountered two luminous eyes
one upon him comfortingly in the semi-gloom of
reat stage, and heard Peg Woffington's voice
r, 'Courage, Mac, courage. Show them you can
In another second the stage was cleared, and the
the curtain rang with a merry little peal that
to him to carry rejoicement and assurance with
, moreover, the tone was like to the voice that
t spoken words of hope in his ear.
heavy green curtain went up with many a creak;
tors commenced their parts. Macklin's heart
to flutter wildly, 'but commending my cause to

Providence,' says he, 'I went boldly on the stage.' was received with some applause, though his appea caused general surprise. Then came the terrible of judgment, in which he was to be set down who had read Shakespeare aright—or as a fool w dared to ignore the traditions handed down to his betters. The opening scenes were tame an but from those terrible front rows in the pit, wl seemed at first bristling with sarcasm, and hilarity, he caught the words, 'Very well—v indeed. This man seems to know what he i Which praise, though faint, had the grateful warming him to his work. A night, a week, years seemed to have passed over his head b third act came, for which he had reserved all his in contrasting the passions of joy and triumph merchant's losses, with grief and despair for J elopement. In bewailing her loss, he rushed up stage hatless, his face distorted by rage, his e wildered, his hands fiercely clutched, his every ment abrupt and convulsive. Never had his au seen such a representation of the Jew; but t new to them, they felt an echo in their hearts told them it was true to nature. Then came th vehement applause; the whole house was in an u he was saved, his success was assured. At th scene all elements of burlesque were abolished Kitty Clive did not for once venture on her mi Lord Mansfield. In this culminating scene able Shylock stood upon the stage; merciless the passions of hatred and revenge; and so i were they portrayed, that, when he whetted the ing knife which was to cut away the pound o the whole house shuddered. Never had ther

acting, and seldom such applause as rang through house when the curtain descended.

e green-room presented a curious appearance at the usion of the performance. Here were assembled bility and critics: some of the former adorned tars and garters, and all of them clad in velvets y colours and satins of rich sheen; and mixing t them, in the freest manner possible, were the nd actresses, scarcely less brilliant in the richness ir sixteenth-century Venetian costumes. What ere exchanged, what compliments were paid, what nts were passed! Every one was now elated by umph, as if it had been a personal matter; and Macklin came into the room, a crowd pressed m ready to offer him a thousand congratulations. Macklin, you were right, after all,' said Fleet- aking him heartily by the hand.

may I ask Mrs. Clive,' says Fielding, going that lady, who was yet attired in the gown of taining to the law, 'why you did not give us itation of the great man to-night?'

faith,' says honest Kitty Clive, 'when I looked ock I was afraid.'

up went Peg Woffington to the hero of the 'An' sure,' says she in an aside, assuming a rogue as she spoke, 'it takes an Irishman to m what a Jew is like.'

bless you, Peggy!' said he, in the same tone, voice trembled a little. 'Your words made a ne.'

, whist, Charley Macklin; sure it's yourself had the palavering tongue,' answered she and then she slipped away, for others pressed to greet him.

Presently there was a stir and bustle in the far of the green-room, and a group of bewigged and ruffled gentlemen came slowly along, bowing t heads, and occasionally laughing mighty heartil answer to the remarks of a thin-legged little gentl demurely dressed in black, who walked in the cen this human cluster. This little gentleman in had a remarkable-looking countenance, with dar ing eyes, and eyebrows that seemed to occupy space in the upper part of his face. When he to where Macklin stood, he paused, as did thos rounding him likewise; a faded smile crossed hi lips, and, rippling upwards, caught the sparkle eyes before it lost itself in the wrinkles of his fo Then he helped himself leisurely to snuff, rest his bony hands on his gold-nobbed cane, and the actor full in the face. Macklin trembled glanced down at him, for he knew well that a epigram or a sarcastic phrase uttered by thes lips would be repeated in every coffee-house and in town on the morrow.

'May I venture to hope,' he said, speaking a big voice to hide his nervousness, and with quaint theatric grace, 'that my poor effo night have given the great Mr. Pope some satisfaction?'

The little gentleman smiled again; those him bent their heads in one common mover catch his words; then, pointing his forefinger t lin, he said,

'This is the Jew
That Shakespeare drew.'

Poor Macklin, overwhelmed by the com bowed half-way to the ground; the group surr

little gentleman cried, 'Excellent!—prodigiously !' and without another word he went out of the n-room, surrounded by his courtiers, to where his h waited him in the lane. The couplet, which has ved the poet who uttered it, and the actor to n it was applied, was repeated all over the town night. 'Gad, sir,' Macklin would say long years when recounting the glories of this memorable ng over a bottle of old port in a snug box at the rd—'gad, sir, though I was not worth fifty pounds e world at that time, let me tell you I was Charles reat for that night.'

ring the Woffington's first season at Drury Lane, frequently came to the green-room of the theatre y sprightly young man, neatly made;' whose face, singularly mobile, and remarkable moreover luminous eyes, at once attracted the actress's on. This was David Garrick, a character destined y an important part in the drama of Peg Woffing- ife. His father, a gentleman of French origin, had an officer in the English army, whose regiment r several years stationed at Lichfield. Here the in married a lady descended on the maternal side n Irish family, who bore him ten children. The f these was David, who grew into a lad full of ess and promise, showing amongst his other a turn for mimicry and recitation. He had at the age of ten, indicated w[illegible] the bent of ius lay, by forming a few of [illegible] schoolfellows s sisters into a theatrical comp[illegible] which, under ction, performed Farquhar's 'Recruiting Officer' a considerable audience. A year later, and the ly lad was sent to Portugal to his uncle, a pros- wine merchant, who had promised [illegible] establish

him in his house. But the wine trade had no attr
tion for David, and in little more than twelve mon
he returned to Lichfield once more, to a home t
would have been happy but for its stings of pove
To strive and remedy this lack of fortune Ca
Garrick went to Gibraltar two years after his
return from Portugal; the exile from his affecti
but large family being in some measure compen
for by a pay double the amount of that he had p
ously enjoyed. But even with that portion of it v
he allowed his delicate and desponding wife, and
surviving children, life was to them a long-cont
struggle to sustain a shabby gentility in the e
their Lichfield neighbours.

During the Captain's residence in what was
as 'foreign parts,' David, then a lad of fourteen,
to have been the member of the family who was s
to carry on a correspondence with the absent h
his house. These letters, presented to the Dyc
Forster Library in the South Kensington Museu
the late John Forster, are marvellously inter
Some of them tell stories of a poverty which, t
occasionally galling, never called forth a complai
was ever borne with a brave show of cheerfulness.

'My mamma received the £30 you was so g
to send,' says David, in the earliest of these
written epistles, commencing with 'Hon. Si
directed in big schoolboy characters 'To Captai
rick, on Brigadier Kirk's Regiment at Gibraltar.'
paid £10 to Mr. Rider, one year's rent; and
ye baker, and if you can spare a little more,
her you will, she is in hopes of paying all ye de
you may have nothing to fret you when you
home.' The Captain took the hint as to sp

le more, for presently David writes, 'My mamma ds her dearest Love and affection to you, and desires to tell you she has cleared almost the Debts, except tle to ye Butcher, which she hopes to clear in a or two.' Then the poor Captain in foreign parts learn that they are so 'very shabby in cloathes all our accoutrements, that we was rather like ny beggars than Gentlemen Soldiers.' The poor t home 'has been nursing one of her daughters, y ill, amost six months, and has become unwell f and is ordered to drink wine, which is sorely t her inclination, as her pocket cannot afford it.' 'my sister Lenny and sister Jenny,' writes young to his father, 'send their Duty to you, and being at want for some Lace for their Heads, and my na being but very low in ye Purse, by reason of lness, could not afford y^m^ so much money, they ye greatest Duty and Obedience request a small to purchase their Head Ornaments. Great ity compels them to give you this trouble, for have never worn anything else but plain Head es, which hardly distinguishes them from ye madams.'

lad has had a present made him by Mr. Hervey, come from London, of 'two pair of large silver , one pair for my shoes, and ye other for ye s knees.' But alas! what use are the latter, if David has no decent breeches to wear. Perhaps er will take the hint, but alas! the Captain in parts has a mind that does not readily receive ions where money is concerned, and his son iting a long time is obliged to speak plainly. ust tell my dear papa,' writes he, approaching ject in a wily manner, 'that I am quite turned

Philosopher; you perhaps may think me vain, but
show you I am not, I would gladly get shut of
characteristick of a philosopher, viz. a ragged pair
breeches. Now, the only way you have to cure y
son of his philosophick qualification is to send
handsome thing for a waistcoat, and pair of bre
to hide his nakedness. They tell me velvet is
cheap at Gibraltar. Amen, and so be it!' No w
he 'began the world,' as Johnson said, 'with a
hunger for money,' for, as the philosopher us
remark, 'he was bred in a family whose study w
make fourpence do as much as others made four
halfpenny do.'

The poor wife, who had borne him ten children
whose health was now shattered, writes to her
husband occasionally, not of the poverty of her
but, like a true wife, of the riches of that love whi
stored for him in her faithful heart. 'Dear lif
soul,' she calls him tenderly; and then comes a con
that must have been sweet indeed to the exile.
not able,' she says, 'to live easy longer without yo
I grow very jealous. But in the midst of all this
not blame my dear. I have very sad dreams fo
but I have the pleasure when I am up to think,
with you, how tender my dear soul would be
nay, was, when I was with you last. O! that I
in my arms. I would tell my dear life how muc
his.' Then David testifies in a charming manne
affection of his mother for his father. Speaki
miniature of the Captain's, which the lad says h
sooner have one glance at, than look a whole da
finest picture in the world, he tells his father, 'M
mamma sighs whenever she passes the picture.
again he adds, 'My mamma sends her most

ections. She says your presence would do her more
d than all the physicians in Europe.' She has 'a
r upon her spirits,' and is sadly depressed by the
ence of him whom she loves, and whom she thinks
by day and dreams of by night; and when he has
n away for some two years, she can bear the separ-
n no longer, and has a scheme for bringing him back
ngland which young Davy reveals to his father.
y mamma,' says he, 'designs to try her interest to
ou leave to come over by next spring, if you are
nt for over before. She designs to apply first to
Brigadeer. My mamma will get Mr. Hervey to
her a pretty Letter to ye Brigadeer ye Purpot of
ll be this, that you having a son to put out, and
amma being uncapable to do it herself, it would
reat detriment to the Family if you was not here
it yourself; and as soon as Mr. Hervey has done
mamma will copy it, and send it to Mr. Adair to
to ye Brigadeer.'

r an absence of about three years, Captain Garrick
ned, and David was sent to a school advertised in
Gentleman's Magazine as 'At Edial, near Lichfield,
ffordshire, where young gentlemen are taught the
and Greek Languages by Samuel Johnson.' The
muel Johnson, whose father was a bookseller in
ld, was well known to David Garrick, who, in
n with his fellow scholars, had but little rever-
r their master's learning. They laughed at his
h gesticulations, and the oddities of his manner;
Mrs. Johnson, a lady described by Garrick to
l as 'very fat, with a bosom of more than ordinary
erance, with swelled cheeks, of a florid red, pro-
by thick painting, and increased by the liberal
cordials; flaring and fantastic in her dress, and

affected both in her speech and her general behaviou was a fruitful source for David's mimicry. 'The you rogues,' says Boswell, speaking of this time, 'used listen at the door of his bed-chamber, and peep throu the keyhole, that they might turn into ridicule tumultuous and awkward fondness for Mrs. Johns whom he used to name by the familiar appellation Tetty or Tetsey, which, like Betty or Betsey, is pro cially used as a contraction for Elizabeth, her Chris name, but which seems ludicrous when applied woman of her age and appearance.'

Johnson's academy had a short life, if a merry and when its doors closed Garrick and he went u town; Johnson having a tragedy, and twopence penny in his pocket, as he used to recount in his pa days, with a humorous twinkle in his eyes. G entered himself as a student of the Honourable S of Lincoln's Inn, paying as fees 'for the use o society the sum of three pounds, three shillings fourpence.' Then he went to study under Mr. C 'a rational philosopher,' the chief purpose for whic had left his home. This was an eventful year in hi Scarce a month had elapsed from the day on whi had departed from Lichfield, when news came to his father's death; his mother quickly followed grave the man she had loved all her life; and came the demise of the Lisbon wine merchant, w his nephew and namesake a legacy of one th pounds sterling.

All idea of studying for the law was now aban and it was decided that David Garrick and his b Peter, his senior by six years, should set up as pa in the wine trade; Peter to conduct the busin Lichfield, and David in Durham Yard, situated

end of one of the smaller streets leading from the Strand. Here, as Foote afterwards said, he lived, 'with three quarts of vinegar in a cellar, and called himself a wine merchant.' David soon showed he had no talent for business, and paid it but little heed, to the great disgust of his elder brother, a man of very different cast; formal, methodical, and industrious, who even at this time entertained a wholesome horror of his brother's predilection for the company of players. But fate, it seemed, favoured David's passion for the society of those connected in any way with the playhouses, inasmuch as Durham Yard was within a stone's throw of Covent Garden, and that the space which lay between swarmed with the coffee-houses, taverns, and ordinaries where the sons of Thespis most did congregate. With all of them Garrick made friends; his bright face, ready ways, and pleasant manners being certain passports to the good-fellowship of a race then and now proverbially genial.

At those ordinaries or coffee-houses he spent that portion of the day which was not devoted to the study of Shakespeare at his desk. Then at night he would sit in the pit of Drury Lane or Covent Garden, watching Delane's graceful lovers, or Theo Cibber's fops; after which he would hie him to the Bedford, the recognized emporium of wit and criticism, where he would listen to plain-faced Jemmy Raftor tell one of his droll Irish stories, or hear Ryan discourse in his discontented, piping voice of the traditional glory of all things dramatic in the past, and of their worthlessness in the present.

'You should have seen the great Wilks, sir,' he would say, 'ah, he was an actor, and his were the days when good acting might be seen at the playhouse'

(here a pinch of snuff); 'and Betterton, sir, whose awe-inspiring Hamlet can never again be equalled; and then Barton Booth, a gentleman, sir, and a player of prodigious merit.' But 'twas sure the old school was dead; the old traditions had passed away for ever (here a grave shake of his head). Perhaps some trace lingered yet in his own playing, it was not for him to say, but he had received great commendations for his Richard the Third: that was true, and he had the honour of being instructed in the part of Marcus in the tragedy of 'Cato' by its author, the great Mr. Addison himself. Then followed a chorus of critics who had sat in the front rows of the pit, and spoke learnedly of the play, praised the stormy mouthing of Bridgewater or Walker, the stiff-jointed love-making of Milward, or damned some trembling aspirant to fame, as lightly as they took a pinch of snuff. Now and then Garrick would add his voice, and lay down his opinions with all the self-assertion of youth. Amongst the company with which he freely mixed, he singled out two men as his especial friends; these were Macklin of Drury Lane, and Giffard, the manager of the Goodman's Fields playhouse. With these kindred spirits he frequently lamented the condition to which the stage was reduced, where nature was wholly ignored, and false principles of art supplied in its place. Comedy was boldly reduced to farce that frequently bordered on buffoonery, passion was interpreted by inflated ranting, love made its protestations in a measured drawl, whilst the ordinary dialogue was delivered in a set, monotonous tone, most wearisome to the ear. Macklin would call to mind his dismissal for speaking a part too familiarly, and his recent success in playing Shylock with realism; and Giffard was of opinion that the town submitted to

the present school of acting, merely for want of knowing better. Then the young wine merchant would show them how comedy should be played according to his thinking. How the jest should flow from the lips naturally and promptly, the laugh come freely as if honestly enjoyed, the facial expression suiting the words and action. Then, as to tragedy, he would show them how he would play Hamlet if he were an actor. The young Dane on beholding his father's ghost should be fixed in mute astonishment, his cheeks should gradually grow pale, his eyes blaze from fear and horror, his voice tremble, as he questioned the visitor from an unknown sphere. Then in the scene with Ophelia, he should feign madness by look and gesture, and the expression of his speech; and to the Queen he should speak daggers to rend her heart with sorrow and remorse; and as Garrick illustrated his conceptions by gesture, tone, and facial expression, the two actors, standing mutely by, would look at and listen to him with surprise, glancing at each other significantly, and nodding their heads sagely. Then they would both urge him to give up trade, and take to the stage, for they were sure he had the makings of a great actor in him.

But this was a suggestion which, though his heart bounded forward to follow it, he was loath to put into practice. All the traditional prejudices of caste handed down to him by the struggling captain in a walking regiment, and his genteel wife with relatives in the Church, and carefully maintained by the highly respectable wine merchant in Lichfield and his sisters, rose in David's mind, and for a time held him back from the calling of a player. An actor was indeed in those days considered a veritable vagabond; a worthless, godless

creature, the fitting object for the censure and disdain of his fellow-creatures. More than twenty years later, when Garrick's example might be supposed to have in some measure mitigated such opinions, Horace Walpole, the elegant patron of arts, lamenting in the bitterness of his heart Lady Susan Strangeways' marriage with 'O'Brien the actor'—a man of irreproachable character, the descendant of an old Irish family ruined by its adherence to James II.—declares this union 'the completion of disgrace. Even a footman were preferable. The publicity of the hero's profession,' adds this fine gentleman, the descendant of an honest timber merchant, 'perpetuates the mortification. I could not have believed that Lady Susan would have stooped so low.'

To become a player was therefore not a step for Garrick to take without consideration and apprehension. Meanwhile, as may well be supposed, the wine trade did not prosper; and when sober Peter Garrick came up to town, he found his partner and brother restless and unhappy. 'All my Illness and lowness of Spirits,' he subsequently wrote to Peter, when he had made the great plunge, 'was owing to my want of resolution to tell you my thoughts when here.' But before he had taken the decisive step, and whilst he was yet struggling with his inclinations, he had made the acquaintance of the Irish actress who had taken the town by storm. Night after night young Garrick was found amongst the crowds which flocked to see her at Covent Garden and Drury Lane, nor had she a more enthusiastic admirer than he. Here was an actress after his own heart; one who neither reduced comedy to burlesque, nor tragedy to rant, but who was at one with nature. He noted that her style had the effect of electrifying

her audiences; and this gave him strong hopes of at least finding a patient hearing, if ever indeed he came to seek his fortune on the boards. It was only natural that this bright-looking young man, full of enthusiasm for the stage, should tell this charming creature with the soft eyes, tender lips, and graceful ways, all that he thought of her as an actress, and much that he felt for her as a woman; and Peggy, with her susceptible Hibernian heart, listened to his earnest voice, looked into his flashing eyes, and loved him. And oh, what a happy time this was for both of them, with all life before them; with such golden dreams of fame in their heads; with such warm love in their hearts. In the spacious, high-ceilinged green-room of old Drury Lane, with its great oak fire-place, curiously carved, and running half way up the wall; its ponderous-framed pictures of Nell Gwyn and Congreve; its dust-covered bust of Shakespeare; its great settle capable of accommodating a dozen persons, drawn close up by the fire; its faded crimson velvet curtains pulled across the high, narrow windows, Garrick would wait in the evenings, with ever a laugh and jest on his lips for the group around him, but with his eye turned anxiously to the door as if he expected some one to enter every minute. Presently the door would be flung wide open, and the imperious, graceful figure of Peg Woffington would sweep in, dressed as Sylvia, or as Lady Betty Modish. Then her lover would join her, and they would sit in some quiet corner of the big room, dimly lighted by a sconce of wax tapers above the chimney-piece, his hand touching hers, her eyes flashing on him in the full radiance of her love, whilst they whispered each other volumes of the airiest nothings in the world; disagreeing to agree, and painting verbal portraits of each other

that borrowed wondrous colours from the light of their mutual passion.

Then he would take from his pocket a copy of the *Gentleman's Magazine* just published, and read for her some verses, with which he seemed most familiar, and which were addressed to Sylvia, and signed 'G.' 'May Heaven and Sylvia grant my suit,' commences one of these verses, which are full of quaint references to 'wavering hearts, sighing swains, constant flames,' and such like phrases, unintelligible to all unacquainted with love. Presently the hated voice of the call-boy would summon her from the heaven of her happiness; when, rising up, she and Garrick would walk hand in hand towards the wings, in the friendly shades of which he would kiss her on her lips; and then being free of the house, ran round to the stage box, that he might be the first to give the signal of her approach by his applause.

Another admirer of Peg Woffington at this period was Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, 'one of the plenipotentiaries of fashion,' wit, satirist, poet, paymaster of the marines, and as pretty a gentleman as ever cracked a bottle at White's. He was the friend of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, of Fox, of Horace Walpole, and of merry Dick Edgecumbe, and had the reputation of being a rake of the first water. Lady Mary said of him that he might be happy if he added to his natural and acquired endowments a dash of morality; but Sir Charles knew little of morals and cared for them still less; they being to his mind but dull things at best. However, this lamentable absence of virtue was no drawback to the friendship of his contemporaries, few of whom were a whit better themselves. He could tell the wittiest if not the decentest of stories; pen a

pasquinade in the twinkling of an eye; ridicule a political enemy in a scathing lampoon; and gamble from sunset to sunrise; for all of which qualities he was dear to his friends. With Fox he was ever 'dear Charles'; Walpole had his portrait framed in black and gold, and set in a panel of the bow-window room in that wonderful gimcrack Gothic castle known as Strawberry Hill; whilst Lady Mary hears that 'he suffers under a dearth of flatterers.' Sir Charles duly fell in love with the beautiful Woffington, and composed poems addressed to her, one of which, 'Lovely Peggy,' included in one of the editions of his works, published in 1776, was vastly admired by the town. It is in itself an excellent example of the love verses of the period, and is not without touches of poetic beauty.

Once more I'll tune the vocal shell,
To hills and dales my passion tell,
A flame which time can never quell,
That burns for lovely Peggy.

Ye greater bards the lyre should hit,
For say what subject is more fit,
Than to record the sparkling wit
And bloom of lovely Peggy.

The sun first rising in the morn,
That paints the dew-bespangled thorn,
Does not so much the day adorn
As does my lovely Peggy.

And when in Thetis' lap to rest,
He streaks with gold the [illegible] west,
He's not so beauteous as [illegible]ed
Appears my lov[illegible]gy.

Were she arrayed in rustic weed[illegible]
With her the bleating flocks I'd [illegible]ed,
And pipe upon mine oaken reed,
To please my lovely Peggy.

With her a cottage would delight,
All's happy when she's in my sight,
But when she's gone it's endless night,
All's dark without my Peggy.

The zephyr air the violet blows,
Or breathes upon the damask rose,
He does not half the sweets disclose
That does my lovely Peggy.

I stole a kiss the other day,
And trust me, nought but truth I say,
The fragrant breath of blooming may,
Was not so sweet as Peggy.

While bees from flower to flower shall rove,
And linnets warble through the grove,
Or stately swans the waters love,
So long shall I love Peggy.

And when death, with his pointed dart,
Shall strike the blow that rives my heart,
My words shall be when I depart,
Adieu, my lovely Peggy.

Garrick, as was natural, entertained a great dread of his verse-making, witty rival, and entreated the Woffington not to see or listen to him. One evening when Garrick visited her he asked her how long it was since she had seen Sir Charles.

'Not for an age,' says she, with a humorous smile on her charming face.

'Nay,' said Garrick, gravely, 'I know you have seen him this morning.'

'Well,' replied she, going up to him, her beautiful lips pouting like a child's, 'I count time by your absence; I have not seen you since morning, and is it not an age since then?'

CHAPTER VI.

Garrick's Irresolution—Plays at Ipswich under a False Name—First Appearance in Town—a Memorable Night—Description of his Richard—The Talk of the Town—Persons of Distinction at the Playhouse—Our little Poetical Hero—Letters to Peter—The Wine-merchant will not be Comforted—David's Arguments and Fair Promises—The Lying Valet—Mimicking the Old Players—The Favour of Great Men—Going to Dublin with Peg Woffington.

MEANWHILE Garrick continued nervously irresolute concerning his future, experiencing by turns both hope and despair. Now his spirits rose at the prospect of his success as an actor held out to him by his friends, and by the woman he loved; and again his mind was sorely depressed by the letters of grave reproof he received from respectable Peter at Lichfield; who heard with much disquietude that his brother David had formed a friendship with one Giffard, a player. After long-continued mental fluctuations, it happened in the summer of 1741, the fourth year of his career as a wine merchant, that through the interest of this same player and manager, an opportunity was offered him of testing his strength as an actor, and for a few nights at least, of gratifying the longing and ambition to play before an audience, which had taken a firm hold upon his life. Moreover, this could be done in the most private manner possible, so that his friends in town, or Peter conducting his decent business in Lichfield, need know nothing of the matter; for the theatre concerning which this offer was made was at Ipswich, and he could, of course, change his name for the occasion.

Accordingly, away he went quite secretly with Giffard to Ipswich, carrying with him the Woffington's best wishes for his success; and in due time he appeared as Aboan—a blackamoor—in the tragedy of 'Oroonoko';

a part which recommended itself to the nervous amateur, from the fact that the necessary black face offered an excellent disguise. The reception he received was sufficient to encourage his appearance in other characters, including that of Captain Brazen; and in these his success was such, that the house was not only crowded nightly by the inhabitants of Ipswich, but the surrounding gentry drove in their coaches to see this excellent new player, styling himself Lyddal. This unlooked-for result, coupled with the fact of his fast declining business, finally determined him to become an actor; and he accordingly arranged with Giffard to play Richard III. at his theatre in Goodman's Fields in the coming autumn. This playhouse, situated in an unsavoury district, had never been favoured with the company of the polite. Indeed, it merely existed on sufferance; four years previously, the passing of the Licensing Bill had limited the number of London theatres to two. In order, therefore, to keep its doors open, the manager had recourse to a very simple ruse, which at the same time fulfilled its object; this was to charge for an entertainment of singing and dancing, and perform the plays gratis. Such was the theatre where Garrick first made his bow to a London audience. Towards the middle of October it was whispered in the green-rooms of the two West End theatres, and in the coffee-houses and taverns all over the town, that a young gentleman of great promise was about to act the part of Richard III. in the Goodman's Fields playhouse. Much curiosity therefore obtained, especially amongst the friends of the said young gentleman. Presently the *London Daily News* printed the following announcement in its advertising columns:

GOODMAN'S FIELDS.

AT THE LATE THEATRE IN GOODMAN'S FIELDS,
Monday next (Oct. 19th) will be performed a
CONCERT OF VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC,
Divided into Two PARTS.

Tickets at Three, Two, and One Shilling.

Places for the Boxes to be taken at the 'Fleece Tavern,' near the Theatre.

N.B.—Between the Two Parts of the Concert will be presented an Historical Play, call'd The

LIFE AND DEATH OF KING RICHARD THE THIRD.

Containing The Distresses and Death of King Henry VI.,
The Artful Acquisition of the Crown by KING RICHARD,
The Murder of young King Edward V. and his Brother in the Tower,
The Landing of the Earl of Richmond,
And the Death of King Richard in the Memorable Battle of Bosworth-Field, being the last that was fought between the Houses of York and Lancaster,
With many other true Historical Passages.

The Part of KING RICHARD by a GENTLEMAN
(Who never appear'd on any stage).

With entertainments of DANCING, by MONS FROMENT, MADAME DUVALL, and the two MASTERS and MISS GRAINER.
To which will be added a Ballad Opera in One Act, call'd

THE VIRGIN UNMASKED,

Both which will be performed gratis by Persons for their Diversion.
The Concert will begin exactly at Six o'clock.

It happened at this very time that a battle royal was raging between the two greater houses, where for four consecutive nights 'As You Like It' was being played;

Peg Woffington and Milward taking the parts of Rosalind and Orlando at the Lane, and Mrs. Pritchard and Hale enacting the same at the Garden.

On the fourth night, Monday, October 19th, 1741, Garrick appeared in the part of Richard III., playing Colley Cibber's freely treated, but very effective version of the great tragedy. In this the poet laureate, who modelled his style after an antiquated actor named Sandford, used in his day to drawl and declaim the part in a shrill, feeble voice, and strut about the boards, to the great satisfaction of his audiences. But nothing could present a more striking contrast to his playing than that of Garrick's; here there was neither strut nor drawl. As he came before a house crowded by those whom curiosity or interest had drawn to this end of the town, the character he assumed was at once visible in the lines of his singularly mobile face, in the accents of his voice, in every turn and movement of his figure. As he proceeded, it was seen that nature had given place to rant. Here was a man acting as if he veritably felt the contending passions that swayed the wicked king. Never had such playing been seen before, and those who witnessed it were at first undecided as to whether they should accept or reject such a complete innovation. But before they were aware of it, he had touched their hearts, and now played upon them at will; and presently an irresistible burst of applause, ringing through the house, proclaimed that his genius had triumphed over prejudice. 'His look, his voice, his attitude changed with every sentiment,' says Arthur Murphy, one of his biographers. 'The rage and rapidity with which he spoke

> "The north—what do they in the north,
> When they should serve their sovereign in the west?"

made a most astonishing impression. His soliloquy in the tent scene discovered the inward man. Everything he described was almost reality; the spectator thought he heard the hum of either army from camp to camp, and steed threatening steed. When he started from his dream, he was a spectacle of horror. In all, the audience saw an exact imitation of nature.' Then comes the interesting testimony to his genius of Mr. Swynfen, an honest neighbour and friend of the Garricks at Lichfield, who sat in the Goodman's Fields on this eventful night, and wrote the news of it next day to Peter, preserved in the collection already mentioned. 'My good friend David Garrick performed last night at Goodman's Fields Theatre,' says this good old gentleman. 'I was there, and was witness to a most general applause He gain'd in the character of Richard the Third; for I believe there was not one in the House that was not in Raptures, and I heard several Men of Judgment declare it their Opinion that nobody ever excelled Him in that Part; and that they were surprised, with so peculiar a Genius, how it was possible for Him to keep off the stage so long.'

The next day nothing was talked of but the performance of the young gentleman, whose name was not yet printed in the bills, but who was pretty well known to the town. Groups gathered in the coffee-houses to hear the enthusiastic descriptions of him given by those who had witnessed his performance. The critics met each other, exchanged bows, took snuff, bobbed their wigs, raised their eyebrows, and looked grave; for it was certain the world was coming to an end now that the town had ventured to admire a man, in whose favour they had not first pronounced. To cap all, the *London Daily Post*, which had seldom indeed noticed

even the finest performance, actually devoted half a dozen lines to the commendation of this young man.

'Last night,' runs the paragraph, 'was perform'd Gratis the Tragedy of Richard III., at the late Theatre in Goodman's Fields, when the character of Richard was perform'd by a Gentleman who never appear'd before, whose reception was the most extraordinary and great that ever was known upon such an occasion; and we hear he obliges the Town this evening with the same Performance.'

It was not only the following evening but four times during this week, and every night of the following save one, that he obliged the town by his performance of Richard. The fame of his extraordinary acting ran from east to west; and every evening a vast concourse of people gathered outside the doors of the little theatre hours before they were opened, whilst hundreds were unable to obtain admittance. Even Drury Lane, with the acting of the charming Woffington as Adriana in 'The Comedy of Errors,' Berintha in 'The Relapse,' and Clarinda in 'The Double Gallant,' was left half-empty. Time seemed but to increase the fame of this new actor. 'From the polite ends of Westminster,' says Murphy, quaintly enough, 'the most elegant company flocked to Goodman's Fields, insomuch that from Temple Bar the whole way was covered with a string of coaches.' People of the first figure and fashion, dukes and duchesses by the dozen, ministers and members of Parliament, wits, critics, and poets, all rushed to see the great actor; moreover, the Prince was expected nightly. The Rev. Thomas Newton, a gentleman described as a learned person with a critical eye, who afterwards became a right reverend bishop, but who was at this time tutor to Lord Carpenter's son, writes to Garrick to secure for

himself and his party a stage box that they 'might see his looks in the scene with the Lady Anne.' The ladies expressed themselves 'almost in love with Richard,' and Mr. Newton wishes later on to take another box for some other friends in order to see Garrick in 'The Orphan' and 'The Lying Valet,' new characters he essayed. These were to include amongst them Mrs. Porter, a famous and most charming actress now some time retired, 'and no less a man than Mr. Pulteney desires to be of our party, and have a place in our box,' writes the Reverend Thomas. Mr. Pulteney was certainly a man of consequence, having been Secretary of War, and being at this time the most popular man in England, though in the following year he 'shrank into insignificance and an earldom.' For all that, Garrick's arrangements did not permit him to act in these plays on the night suggested by the embryo bishop, who consequently writes to the player, 'It would certainly have been a very great honour to you, if of no other advantage, for such a person as Mr. Pulteney to come so far to be one of your audience; and if I had been in your capacity I should have thought it worth while to have strained a point, or done almost anything rather than have disappointed him. I would have acted that night, if I had spared myself all the rest for it.'

However, the party came later on and Mrs. Porter was in raptures; 'she returned to town on purpose to see you,' says Newton, 'and declares she would not but have come for the world. You are born an actor, she says, and do more at your first appearing than ever anybody did with twenty years' practice; and good God, says she, what will he be in time.' Another famous actress, Mrs. Bracegirdle, who had played in the previous century, and who had now retired for over thirty years,

came out into the world again, anxious to see this prodigy of her later days; and with her came old Colley Cibber, who had laughed maliciously whenever Garrick's praises had been sung, but who, when he had seen him act, was forced to mutter the bare admission, 'Why, faith, Bracey, the fellow is clever.'

Among others who flocked to the stuffy little theatre was my Lord Orrery, an authority where the drama was concerned, and a critic, mind you, of the first understanding, and, moreover, a man of vast experience. He was delighted with Garrick's prodigious powers, but feared the young man would be spoiled; 'for,' says his lordship, 'he will have no competitor.' Then his Grace of Argyle drove down in his ponderous coach to Goodman's Fields, and swore a ducal oath that this player was superior to the great Betterton of famous memory. Likewise came Horace Walpole, dainty in ruffles and velvet, and high-heeled, silver-buckled shoes, who never had sympathy with public opinions, and now barely admitted with a sneer that 'the wine-merchant turned player,' was an excellent mimic, but he could see nothing in his acting, 'though,' he added, 'it is heresy to say so.' Mr. Pitt came also, and added his testimony that 'this young man was the best player in England.' But amongst all those who flocked nightly to the playhouse, there was one of whom Garrick was far more proud than of the dozen dukes, who, according to Gray, were to be seen at Goodman's Fields of a night. This was none other than Mr. Pope, who was looked upon with the most profound respect, and whose opinions were regarded with feelings little less than reverent by his contemporaries. Garrick, long years after, described his sensations to Percival Stockdale, on learning that the little poet of Twickenham was one of his auditors.

'When I was told,' said he, that 'Pope was in the house, I instantaneously felt a palpitation at my heart; a tumultuous, not a disagreeable emotion in my mind. As I opened my part, I saw our little poetical hero, dressed in black, seated in a side box near the stage, and viewing me with a serious and earnest attention. His look shot and thrilled like lightning through my frame, and I had some hesitation in proceeding from anxiety and from joy. As Richard gradually blazed forth, the house was in a roar of applause, and the conspiring hand of Pope shadowed me with laurels.' The conspiring tongue of little Mr. Pope, however, did him more honour still. Turning to my Lord Orrery—beside whom he was seated—the little poet said, 'That young man never had his equal as an actor, and he will never have a rival!'

But, although the town might ring with the news of his triumph, David had his private misgivings, which were not easily to be overcome, regarding the step he had taken. He knew but too well that his brother Peter, sedate and grave; his sisters, who even in the gentility of their early girlhood had feared to be considered as mere vulgar madams; and his friends—these terrible friends, who are as the plague and pestilence to many an aspiring life—would one and all regard this new departure as a black disgrace wantonly flung upon the spotlessness of their respectability. Accordingly, he must write to them, and get his good friend Mr. Swynfen to do so likewise, and represent in as fair a light as was possible this dreadful act of his, before any false and misleading report concerning him could reach their ears. On the morning following his great performance, therefore, Mr. Swynfen wrote to Peter; and even during the excitement of that day, David himself found time to pen a letter to his brother,

and to his cousin Peter Fermignac, a scion of the wealthier branch of the family.

'I do not doubt,' commenced Mr. Swynfen, bluntly enough, in his epistle to Peter, 'but you will soon hear my good Friend David Garrick performed last night at Goodman's Fields Theatre; and for fear you should hear any false or malicious Account that may perhaps be disagreeable to you, I will give you the Truth, which much pleased me.' Then follows the account of that most memorable night already quoted. Moreover, the worthy man strives to appease Peter by imputing to him sentiments less narrow in their circumference than those which sway his neighbours; which shows that he mistook his man, as the wine-merchant of Lichfield soon let him see. 'Many of his Country Friends,' continues Mr. Swynfen, 'who have been most used to Theatrical Performances in Town Halls, &c., by strollers, will be apt to imagine the highest Pitch a Man can arrive at on the Stage, is about that exalted degree of Heroism as the Herberts and the Hallams have formerly made us laugh and cry with; and there are, I don't question, many others, who because their fathers were call'd Gentlemen, or perhaps themselves the first, that will think it a disgrace and a scandal that the Child of an old Friend should endeavour to get an honest Livelihood, and is not content to live in a scanty manner all his Life because his Father was a Gentleman. I think I know you well enough to be convinced that you have not the same sentiments, and I hope there are some other of his Friends, who will not alter their Opinion or Regard for Him, till they find the Stage corrupt his Morals and makes Him less deserving, which I do not take by any means to be a necessary consequence, nor likely to happen to my honest Friend David.'

But honest David's letter to his brother is not quite so hopeful; he knows Peter's hard nature, and pleads to him submissively.

'I rece'd my shirt safe,' he commences; 'and am now to tell you what I suppose you may have heard of before this. But before I let you into my affair, 'tis proper to premise some things, that I may appear less culpable in yr opinion than I might otherwise do. I have made an Exact Estimate of my stock of wine, and what money I have out at interest, and find that since I have been a wine merchant, I have run out near four hundred pounds, and trade not increasing. I was very sensible some way must be thought of to redeem it. My mind (as you must know) has been always inclin'd to ye Stage, nay, so strongly so that all my Illness and lowness of Spirits was owing to my want of resolution to tell you my thoughts when here. Finding at last both my Inclination and Interest requir'd some new way of Life I have chose ye most agreeable to myself, and though I know you will be much displeas'd at me, yet I hope when you shall find that I have ye genius for an actor without ye vices, you will think less severe on me, and not be asham'd to own me for a Brother.' How could Peter resist this touching appeal? 'Last night,' he continues, 'I played Richard ye Third to ye surprise of Every Body, and as I shall make very near £300 per annum by It, and as it is really what I doat upon, I am resolv'd to pursue it.' Then he adds, nervously, 'Pray write me an answer immediately,' and concludes with a postscript, 'I have a farce ("Ye Lying Valet") coming out at Drury Lane.'

Then comes the letter to his cousin, Peter Fermignac. Lest this worthy relative, whom he is anxious to conciliate, should be apprehensive of his design to continue

on the stage, he troubles him with an account of his intention. To him he therefore repeats the excuses already made to Peter. 'You must know,' he writes, 'that since I have been in Business (the wine trade I mean), I have run out almost half my Fortune.' After some further particulars relative to business, he continues, 'My mind led me to the stage, which, from being very young, I found myself very much Inclining to, and have been very unhappy that I could not come upon it before. The only thing that gives me pain is that my Friends, I suppose, will look very cool upon me, particularly the Chief of them; but what can I do? I am wholly bent upon the thing, and can make £300 per annum by it. As my brother will settle at Lichfield, I design to throw up the wine trade as soon as I can conveniently, and desire you will let my uncle know. If you should want to speak to me, the Stage Door will be always open to you, or any other part of the house, for I am manager with Mr. Giffard, and you may always command your most humble servant.'

This letter Mr. Peter Fermignac sent to his aunt, with the following quaint commentary:—'Dear madam, the under-written is a copy of a Letter sent me from David Garric, who play'd Crook'd Back Richard last night, and does it to-night again at Goodman's Fields. I leave you to consider of it, and am very sorry for the contents, but I thought fit to communicate them to you, and am your most dutiful nephew.'

When the sedate Peter had sufficiently recovered from the prodigious blow which his respectable feelings had received by his brother's news, he wrote up to town, in no gentle terms, it may be assumed. What he said can alone be gathered from David's reply. 'My Dear Brother,' writes the poor, perplexed player, 'the uneasi-

ness I have received at your letter is inexpressible; however, 'twas a shock I expected, and had guarded Myself as well as I could against it; and the Love I sincerely have for you, together with ye prevailing Arguments you have made use of, were enough to overthrow my strongest resolutions, did not necessity (a very pressing advocate) on my side convince me that I am not so much to blame as you think I am. As to my uncle upbraiding you with keeping our Circumstances a secret, I am surpris'd at it, for to be sure what I have run out has been more owing to my own wilfulness than any Great miscarriage in Trade. But run out I have, and, let me live never so warily, I must run out more, and indeed the Trade we have, if you will reflect very seriously, can never be sufficient to maintain me and a servant handsomely. As for the stage,' he urges, with much meekness of spirit, 'I know in general it deserves your Censure, but, if you will consider how handsomely and how reputably some have liv'd, as Booth, Mills, Wilks, Cibber, &c., and admitted into and admired by the Best Companies, &c. And as my genius that way (by ye best judges) is thought wonderful, how can you be so averse to my proceedings, when not only my Inclinations, but my Friends, who at first were surpris'd at my intent by seeing me on ye stage, are now well convinc'd 'twas impossible for me to keep off. As to Company,' he continues, with a pardonable air of pride, 'ye Best in Town are desirous of mine, and I have rece'd more civilities and favours from such since my playing than I ever did in all my Life before. Mr. Glover (Leonidas, I mean) has been every night to see me, and sent for me, and told me as well as Every Body he converses with that he had not seen such acting for ten years before. In short, were I to tell you

what they say about me, 'twould be too vain, though I am now writing to a Brother. However, Dear Peter, so willing am I to be continu'd in your affections that, were I certain of a less income with more reputation, I would gladly take to It. I have not yet had my name in ye Bills, and have play'd only ye Part of Richard III., which brings crowded audiences every night, and Mr. Giffard returns ye service I have done him very amply. However, Dear Peter, write me a Letter next post, and I'll give you a full answer, not having Time enough at present. I have not a Debt of twenty shillings upon me, so in that be very easy. I am sorry my sisters are under such uneasiness, and as I really love both them and you, will ever make it my study to appear your affectionate Brother.'

But even these soft words had not the desired effect of turning away Peter's wrath. An honest wine merchant, whose father had been a recruiting officer, whose mother had been the daughter of an impoverished vicar choral, disgraced by a brother turned stage-player, was a serious matter, not to be lightly overlooked. In the eyes of his neighbours poor Peter must assuredly fall from the high estate of his respectability; nay, his very business would assuredly feel the shock from the proceedings of one who was once intimately connected with it. Therefore Peter's anger was exceeding great, the more so as no persuasion he could use, no arguments concerning the misfortunes which his brother's stage-playing must assuredly entail on the family, had any avail with the perpetrator of the outrage, who met his complaints with gentle reasonings, his sneers and murmurings with fair words and kind.

'I am very sorry you still seem so utterly averse to what I am so greatly Inclin'd, and to what ye best

Judges think I have ye greatest of Genius for,' David again writes to him on the 10th of November. 'The great, nay, indescribable success and approbation I have met with from ye Greatest Persons in England have almost made me resolve (though I'm sorry to say it against your entreaties) to pursue it, as I certainly shall make a fortune by it, if Health continues. Mr. Lyttleton, Mr. Pitt, and several other members of Parliament were to see me play Chamont in "Ye Orphan," and Mr. Pitt, who is reckon'd ye Greatest Orator in the House of Commons, said I was ye best actor ye English Stage had produc'd, and he sent a Gentleman to me to let me know he and ye other Gentlemen would be glad to see Me. The Prince has heard so great a character of me that we are in daily expectation of his coming to same.' Then he proceeds to business, of which he never lost sight even in his palmiest days. 'I have been told,' he writes, 'that you are afraid Giffard has had my money. Upon my honour he does not owe me a farthing, having paid me long ago what I lent him, which was but £30. I receive at present from him (tho' 'tis a secret) six guineas a week, and am to have a clear Benefit, which will be very soon, and I have been offer'd for it £120. You can't imagine what regard I meet with; ye Pit and Boxes are to be put together, and I shall have all my friends (who still continue so to me, though you cannot be brought over). If you come to town, your lodgings will cost you nothing, I having a bed at Arthur's for you. Pray let me know if you'll come immediately. And if you chuse to have your share [illegible] what you have at Lichfield, ye Cooper shall take a strict Survey of ye vaults, and I will be at half ye expense of ye carriage; if not, I'll make a sale here, but let me know what you resolve upon, and I will assure you

'tis my greatest desire to continue your affectionate Brother.'

The account of so much honour done the player by Mr. Glover, an author of eminence in his day, a clever speaker, and an adviser of the Prince's, and by Mr. Lyttleton, likewise a friend of His Royal Highness, probably helped to lighten the burden of disgrace that Peter had allowed to fall so heavily on his shoulders, for David, in writing to him next, says:

'As you finished your last Letter with saying, though you did not approve of ye Stage, yet you would always be my affectionate Brother, I may now venture to tell you I am very near quite resolv'd to be a player, as I have ye judgment of ye best Judges (who to a man are of opinion) that I shall turn out (nay, they say have) not only ye Best Tragedian, but Comedian in England. I would not say so much to anybody else, but as this may somewhat palliate my Folly you must excuse me. Mr. Lyttleton was with me last night, and took me by the hand, and said he never saw such playing upon ye English stage before. I have great offers from Fleetwood, but he's going to sell to Gentlemen, and I don't doubt but I will make for myself very greatly. We have greater business than either Drury Lane or Covent Garden. Mr. Giffard himself gave me yesterday twenty Guineas for a Ticket. As to hurting you in your affairs, it shall be my constant endeavours to forward your welfare with my all. If you should want money, and I have it, you shall command my whole, and I know I shall soon be more able by playing and writing to do you service than any other way. My uncle,' he adds, 'I am told, will be reconcil'd to me, for even ye merchants say 'tis an honour to him, not otherwise.'

'Surely, with tidings of such prosperity, with offers

of such generosity, and with the intelligence of his uncle's reconciliation, Peter could not hold out any longer; and so a reconciliation ensued, over which the wine merchant had in after years much reason to rejoice. Meanwhile, David, or as the play-bills down to the 22nd of November continued to style him, 'The young gentleman who perform'd Richard,' was playing several new characters, such as Clodio in 'Love Makes a Man,' Chamont in 'The Orphan,' Jack Smatter in 'Pamela,' and winning fresh success. The *London Daily Post* of November the 27th, speaking of the Goodman's Fields playhouse, says, 'Several hundred persons were obliged to return for want of room; the House being full soon after five o'clock.'

His farce, 'The Lying Valet,' was ready by the end of November, and was produced on the 30th of that month, not at Drury Lane, but at Goodman's Fields, Garrick playing the part of Sharp; and such was its success, that five days later the farce, in two acts, was published for a shilling, 'As it is performed Gratis at the late Theatre in Goodman's Fields, by David Garrick;' a name to become henceforth memorable in the annals of the stage. Of course a copy of this farce was sent to Peter, with all the pride which an author feels in his first-born. 'On Monday last, I sent you,' he writes to him, '"The Lying Valet." The Valet takes prodigiously, and is approv'd of by men of Genius, and thought ye most diverting Farce that ever was perform'd. I believe you'll find it read pretty well, and in performance it's a general Roar from beginning to end; and I have got as much Reputation in ye Character of Sharp as in any other character I have perform'd.' Then he names the various plays in which he has acted, thinking Peter would be glad to hear

of them, and adds, 'I have had great success in all; and 'tis not determined whether I play tragedy or comedy best. Old Cibber has spoken with ye greatest commendation of my acting.'

On the 2nd of December (the occasion of his first benefit), Garrick played this farce, which was preceded by the tragedy of 'The Fair Penitent,' taking the part of Lothario, 'being the first time of his appearance in that character.' So great was the expected crush, it was announced that for this night 'the Stage will be built after the Manner of an Amphitheatre, when servants will be allowed to keep Places, and likewise in the Front Boxes, but not in the Pit, who are desir'd to be at the House by Three o'clock.'

The downfall of the old school of acting was now complete. Having once seen nature portrayed on the stage, Garrick felt sure the town would never again accept pedantic rant in its place. The old actors were of course terribly incensed by his success. Quin, who for years had been without a rival, could ill brook one now in a novice of five-and-twenty summers. The town was, he declared, mad, but would presently come to its senses, whence, the inference was, it would return to its old love in the sturdy person of this famous old ranter again. The young man's style, he furthermore declared, was heresy; to which Garrick replied, it was reformation. He was yet, however, to give the old school its final blow, by his performance in 'The Rehearsal.' In this amusing comedy—in which Mr. Bayes, a stage manager, instructs his company in the way they should act—Garrick saw an ample outlet for the rich vein of mimicry he possessed, inasmuch that, as the manager, he could give representations of the best known actors of the day. Yet for some time he shrank from afford-

ing them such annoyance as this must naturally cause, though Giffard was desirous of putting the comedy on his stage. A strange tale, beautifully illustrative of human nature, hangs thereby, which is told in a manuscript note that I found among the pages of some old theatrical records, once the property of Dr. Burney. His son, Charles Burney, writes—

'While Mr. Garrick was acting at the Theatre in Goodman's Fields, Mr. Giffard, the manager, urged him to play the part of Bayes on that stage, in order that he might display his talents for mimicry in his imitation of the favourite actors at all the theatres. Mr. Garrick declined it at first; but when Mr. Garrick pressed the point strongly, Mr. Garrick promised to play the part, provided he might be allowed to take off the manager himself. Mr. Giffard declared he had not the slightest objection; but when the trial was made, and Mr. Garrick's imitation of Mr. Giffard created unusual laughter, it offended him so deeply, that a challenge was the consequence, and Mr. Garrick was wounded in the arm. This story my father, Dr. Burney, received from Mr. Garrick.'

'The Rehearsal' was, however, played without the personation of Giffard on the 3rd of February, 1742, with prodigious success. The whole town laughed loud and long at the imitations of those they had formerly admired. 'In the character of Bayes,' says Arthur Murphy, 'he exhibited to the life the vain coxcomb who had the highest conceit of himself, and thought the art of dramatic poetry consisted in strokes of surprise and thundering versification. The players of his day he saw were equally mistaken. In order, therefore, to display their errors in the most glaring light, he took upon him occasionally to check the performers who

were rehearsing his play, and teach them to deliver their speech in what he called the true theatrical manner. For this purpose he selected some of the most eminent performers of the time, and by his wonderful powers of mimicry was able to assume the air, the manner, and the deportment of each in his turn. Delane was at the head of his profession. He was tall and comely, had a clear and strong voice, but was a mere declaimer. Garrick began with him; he retired to the upper part of the stage, and drawing his left arm across his breast, rested his right elbow on it, raising a finger to his nose, and then came forward in a stately gait, nodding his head as he advanced, and in the exact tones of Delane spoke the following lines:

> "So boar and sow, when any storm is nigh,
> Snuff up and smell it gath'ring in the sky."'

Those who were mimicked were of course outrageous, but the town was highly diverted, and Garrick and his manager were equally satisfied. In March he had another benefit on the 18th, when he played Master Johnny, a lad of fifteen, in 'The School-boy,' after the performance of 'King Lear.' 'The farce of "The School-boy,"' says Boaden, in his biographical memoir, 'was written by Colley Cibber, who was still living; and he might, and very probably did, see that wonderful junction of eighty-four and fifteen by the same actor.' His fame daily increased, the crowds still flocked to Goodman's Fields, and the great ones of the earth paid him honour. In April he writes to Peter with a sense of triumph at his heart.

'Ye favour I meet from ye Greatest Men, has made me far from Repenting of my choice. I am very intimate with Mr. Glover, who will bring out a tragedy next winter upon my account. I have supped twice

with ye Great Mr. Murray, Counsellor, and shall with Mr. Pope by his introduction. I supped with Mr. Lyttleton, ye Prince's Favourite, last Thursday night, and met with ye highest civility and complaisance. He told me he never knew what acting was till I appeared, and said I was only born to act what Shakespeare writ. These things daily occurring give me great Pleasure. I dined with Lord Halifax and Lord Sandwich, two very ingenious noblemen, yesterday, and am to dine at Lord Halifax's next Sunday with Lord Chesterfield. I have ye pleasure of being very intimate with Mr. Hawkins Browne of Burton; in short, I believe nobody (as an actor) was ever more caressed, and my character as a private man makes them more desirous of my company. All this *entre nous* as one brother to another. I am not fix'd for next year, but shall certainly be at ye other end of ye Town. I am offered five hundred guineas and a clear benefit, or part of management. I can't be resolved what I shall do till ye season is finished.'

In this month he made his first appearance at Drury Lane, on which occasion he played for the benefit of the widow of a comedian named Harper; and later on entered into an engagement with Fleetwood to play at his theatre in the coming autumn. Before the end of this most memorable season, his fame had spread so far that it crossed the St. George's Channel, and Du Val, the manager of Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin, arranged with him and Peg Woffington to play in that fair city in the months of June, July, and August. And so together they departed for Ireland.

CHAPTER VII.

Excitement in Dublin—A Warm Greeting—The Delight of the Town—Hamlet and Ophelia—Back to London—The Rival Playhouse—Quin's Reputation—His Contempt for Garrick—Quin and Macklin—A Green-room Quarrel—Making it up—Charming Susanna Cibber—'A Romp and a Good-natured Boy'—Theo Cibber's Baseness—Elopement, Rescue, and Action—Legal Bathos—Woffington and Garrick at Drury Lane.

THE announcement that Peg Woffington, a child of the people, who had thirteen years ago sung in a canvas booth in George's Court, had first put forth her genius at the Aungier Street playhouse, and had since gained widespread fame in London town, was to appear at the Smock Alley Theatre, threw the excitable citizens of Dublin into a fever of delight. This was heightened by the advertisements stating that Garrick would likewise play on the same stage at the same time. The season was not to commence at Smock Alley till the middle of June. On the 8th of that month the *Dublin Mercury* announced to its readers that 'the famous Mr. Garrick and Miss Woffington are hourly expected from England to entertain the nobility and gentry during the summer season, when especially the part of Sir Harry Wildair will be performed by Miss Woffington.' The same journal, it may be noticed, requested the manager of the theatre 'that he will cause the nails to be carefully pulled out of the benches of the pit, otherwise nine gentlemen in ten will be a pair of stockings out of pocket every time they go there.'

On the 11th of June, 1742, Peg Woffington arrived in her native city with Garrick and the Signora Barbarina, who was to dance between the acts, and represent in her charming person a Nymph of the Plain, in the

new grand ballet called 'The Rural Assembly.' Dancing, it may be here remarked, was an important item in the programme during this engagement; for presently, when, at the desire of several persons of quality, Garrick played the part of Lothario in 'The Fair Penitent,' the following 'entertainments of dancing' were given between the acts. At the conclusion of Act I., 'The Grecian Sailor,' by Mr. Will Delamain; of Act II., 'The Wooden Shoe Dance,' by Mr. Morris; of Act III., a musett by Signora Barbarina; of Act IV., 'The Old Woman with Pierrot in the Basket,' by Mr. Morris.

Four days after the arrival of the Woffington and Garrick, the season commenced at the Smock Alley playhouse, when she appeared in her famous character as Sir Harry Wildair. Her name had become a familiar sound in the mouths of the goodly citizens; stories of her wit and repartee were yet recounted in the quadrangles of Trinity College; and a tradition of her beauty lingered like a warm memory in the hearts of a people never insensible to the effect of woman's loveliness. She had come back to her own people; not a man and woman in the town but felt as if they had a special interest in her; as if her triumphs in some way reflected credit on them in whose midst the first years of her life had been spent. So the audience that gathered to receive her on this the first night of her reappearance was great. As she came upon the stage, she saw a sea of bright faces beaming on her from pit to gallery; and a pleasant sense of kindly gra[illegible]e went out from her heart to theirs that united th[illegible] a common bond of friendship. Cheer upon cheer [illegible] through the house, in response to which, with a st[illegible]e fluttering at her heart, with smiles on her lips, and with tears in her beautiful eyes, she bowed again and again. Garrick

was not playing that night, but he stood at the wings to witness her reception, and when she came off the stage he was ready to greet her. 'Ah! Peggy,' he said, 'you are the queen of all hearts.' She looked straight at the bright face before her, and a smile in which sadness lurked shadow-like came on her lips. 'Ay,' she replied, as she passed him, 'queen of all hearts, yet not legal mistress of one.'

Dublin audiences had pleasant memories of her Sir Harry Wildair, but practice having added a higher polish, a more subtle finish to her acting, they were now delighted beyond expression with the perfect picture of the graceful and accomplished rake which she presented them. She became the theme of every tongue; prints of her were exposed for sale in the stationers' windows; and ballads setting forth the charms of 'purty Peggy, the true love of my heart, with eyes as black as hurtle berry, and glance like Cupid's dart,' were sung and sold in vast numbers in the streets.

On the third night of the season, Garrick appeared as Richard the Third, the Woffington playing Lady Anne, and the theatre was again crowded to excess by people of the first consequence, who three hours before the performance commenced had sent servants to keep their places. The combination of two such famous personages playing in the same house made the town stage mad; and the scenes which were occasionally witnessed in the playhouse were distressing. Women shrieked at Richard's death, sobbed aloud at sad Ophelia's madness, and went into hysterics over the sorrows of King Lear. The heat which the people endured in the stifling atmosphere for hours, was prodigious. So warm was the season towards the end of June and the commencement of the following month, that the *Dublin Mercury*

of July the 6th mentions that 'oats is very near being reaped, and if the weather is favourable we will have some in our own market next Saturday, which is something extraordinary; oats being the latest grain.' The result of this unusually warm weather, and the crowded houses in Smock Alley, was, that a fever broke out in the town, which attacked many, and carried away numbers from the playhouse to the grave.

It was during this engagement that Garrick first attempted the part of Hamlet, which he had long and carefully studied. The Dublin citizens were not only enthusiastic admirers of the drama, but were, moreover, profound worshippers of Shakespeare; therefore the announcement that Garrick was about to play this favourite character gave them unbounded satisfaction, and though their expectations were great, they were not disappointed. Never had they witnessed such acting. On his first appearance the marked melancholy of his face, the deep thought dwelling in his eyes, his listless movements, and attitudes indicative of depression, struck all beholders; while his mere utterance of the line, 'I have that within me which passeth all show,' sent a thrill of sympathy through their hearts. When presently the ghost appeared the colour fled from his face, the words trembled as they escaped his lips. Then his exquisite sensibility, the melting tenderness of his love for Ophelia, the whirlwind of his passion, the depth and despair of his grief, were portrayed with an effect never before produced. 'The strong intelligence of his eye,' says Davis, speaking of him in this play, 'the animated expression of his whole countenance, the flexibility of his voice, and his spirited action, riveted the attention of an admiring audience.' Nothing could be more graceful, more pathetic, more beautiful, than the Woffington as

Ophelia; her love and sorrow were inexpressibly tender, her madness filled the house with awe and brought tears to many eyes. But whether she played Ophelia, or Cordelia, Lætitia in 'The Old Bachelor,' or Miss Lucy in 'The Virgin Unmasked,' she charmed her Dublin admirers.

On the first night of July she took her benefit, when was presented 'The Tragical History of King Richard the Third; the part of King Richard to be performed by Mr. Garrick, being the last time of his appearing in that character during the season; the part of Lady Anne to be performed by Miss Woffington; with entertainments of dancing by Signora Barbarina. To which will be added a diverting ballad opera called "The Virgin Unmasked." The part of Miss Lucy by Miss Woffington, with a new epilogue in the character of Miss Lucy wrote by Mr. Garrick.' This brief but remarkable season ended on the 19th of August, 1742, when the Woffington and Garrick returned to London, preparatory to their appearance in September at old Drury Lane.

The London season now commencing was one of the most brilliant and memorable in the history of the stage; brilliant because of those two stars who had so suddenly arisen in the theatrical firmament, memorable as a period when the battle between the old school and the new was fought with a vast show of bravery on either side. At Drury Lane, Fleetwood had gathered round him, besides the Woffington and Garrick, such favourite players as Kitty Clive, Mrs. Pritchard, and Macklin; whilst at Covent Garden were Mrs. Cibber, Quin, Ryan, and Bridgewater. Quin was the acknowledged head of the old school. He had in his day played with Wilks and Booth, and since the retirement

of the latter he had no rival till young Garrick came to push him from his high place in the playgoers' regard. His famous soliloquy in Cato, it was remembered, had been encored; his Sir John Bute had been pronounced inimitable; his Falstaff was considered unequalled. Foote recommended any one who wanted to witness a character perfectly played to see Mr. Quin in his part, 'and if he does not express a desire to spend an evening with that merry mortal,' said the wit, 'why, I would not spend one with him if he would pay my reckoning.' Quin's contempt for Garrick and his new-fangled ways was openly avowed. 'If he is right,' said the veteran, with an incredulous smile, 'then I and the rest of the players must have been wrong.' He had no fear, therefore, of this young jack-anapes, and was ready to test the public favour with him any night.

The dislike which he cherished for Garrick he likewise heartily extended to another member of the Drury Lane company, Macklin, who, by his playing the part of Shylock in a realistic manner but a little before, had it was certain paved the way for the natural school of acting. Moreover, there had been an old standing quarrel between these actors, the origin of which happily illustrates the manners of the green-room in those days. It happened one night that, when Macklin was playing the part of Jerry Blackacre to Quin's Captain Manly, the former, by some business he introduced, made the audience laugh heartily. When they came off the stage, Quin, who ruled as supreme despot in the theatre, abused him in round terms, told him he was at his tricks, and that was no having a chaste scene with him as an actor. To this Macklin replied that he did not want to disturb him, but was anxious

to show off a little himself. In the following scenes Macklin continued the same business, when the audience now laughed more than ever, and gave him some signs of their approbation, which disturbed the great man mightily, who, on going into the green-room, indulged in fresh abuse. Macklin declared he could not play otherwise; Quin insisted that he could, to which the other replied in plain English, 'You lie!' Now at that instant it happened that Quin was chewing an apple, which, in his vast indignation, he spat into his hand and flung full in Macklin's face. In a second the green-room was in confusion; there was a violent scuffle, and in less than a minute Macklin had forced Quin into a chair, and was pummelling his face in a right hearty manner, until it was swelled to double its ordinary size. To make matters worse, Quin was obliged to go on the stage in a short time, but he mumbled his part in such a manner that the audience began to hiss, whereupon he at once stepped to the centre, informed them that something unpleasant had happened, and that he was ill.

When the curtain was down, he told Macklin he must give him satisfaction, and that, when he had changed his clothes, he would wait for him at the Obelisk at Covent Garden. Macklin promised he would be with him presently; but when Quin had gone he remembered he had to play in the after-piece, so he resolved that till this was over he would let Quin fret and fume. When the part was finished, Fleetwood, who was desirous of peace among the members of his company, carried Macklin to his house, where he made him sup and sleep, and, when morning came, persuaded him to make an apology to Mr. Quin, which he did, and there the matter dropped. After this no word was

spoken between them for long, and a studied deportment on either side seemed to indicate that nothing save the necessity of business could ever make them associate again. Till at last it happened they both, in company with many others, met one evening in a tavern at Covent Garden. Their hearts were softened, for they had just returned from laying a fellow-actor at rest—an excellent fellow, the son of a baker, concerning whom Foote, who could not resist being funny even on such an occasion, said they 'had been to see him shovelled into the family oven.' By degrees the company at the tavern dropped off one by one, until these two were left together.

Presently Quin roused himself, looked round, and finding he was alone in Macklin's company, became embarrassed; and for some moments there was silence in the room. But in a little while he, in polite and solid phrases, drank Macklin's health, which the latter, as in duty bound, returned. Then came a pause more awkward than the first, which Quin again broke by addressing his companion. 'There has been a foolish quarrel between you and me, sir,' said he, 'which, though accommodated, I must confess I have been unable to forget till now. The melancholy occasion of our meeting, and the circumstance of our being left together, I thank God, have made me see my error. If you can, therefore, forget it, give me your hand, and let us live together in future like brother performers. Macklin eagerly stretched out his hand, and assured him of his friendship in hearty words. It would not have been proper if this reconciliation was not sealed by a fresh bottle, ordered by Macklin, which was followed by another called for by Quin; and by the time this was finished, the latter had quietly closed his

eyes on this wicked world of hatred and quarrels and revenge, and wandered into the peaceful land of dreams. The light of early dawn had by this time begun to peep in at the high, narrow windows of the tavern parlour; the candles burned low in their sockets, and it was full time for Mr. Quin to rest in his virtuous bed. A chair was therefore sent for, but not one could be found at that hour, when Macklin, desiring the waiters to lift the great man on his back, carried him in that manner to his lodgings. But Quin was not, in his cooler moments, ready to act up to the words he had uttered when his heart and his head were softened by wine. He seldom mentioned Macklin's name without a sneer or a sarcastic remark; and he was now mortified that this excellent old actor should strengthen the opposition company of Drury Lane play-house.

The actress engaged to take the principal female parts at Covent Garden, was the wife of the unfortunate scapegrace, Theophilus Cibber. This lady, who rejoiced in the name of Susanna Maria, long occupied the attention of the town. She was the daughter of a respectable upholsterer in Covent Garden, and sister to Thomas Arne, afterwards doctor of music. She, too, had a musical genius, and a voice so sweet that Handel specially arranged one of the airs in the 'Messiah' to suit her. Shortly after her marriage with Theo Cibber, she expressed a strong desire to become an actress, for which her melodious voice, beautiful face, and graceful figure seemed eminently suited. She therefore received instructions from her father-in-law, old Colley, who was regarded as a master of his art. She subsequently appeared as Zara in the tragedy of that name at Drury Lane in the year 1736, when, according to a quaint account, 'She gave both surprise and delight to the

audience, who were no less charmed with the beauties of her present performance than with the prospect of future entertainment from so valuable an acquisition to the stage; a prospect which was ever after perfectly maintained, and a meridian lustre shone forth fully equal to what was promised from the morning dawn.'

The 'meridian lustre' was for a time, however, eclipsed by the ugly shadow of her husband's wickedness; the story of which vastly diverted the town, whilst it lent additional interest in the performances of this frail and beautiful woman, who was more sinned against than sinning. Theophilus Cibber had, even in the first years of their married life, appropriated his wife's earnings, and freely squandered them in reckless profligacy. Not satisfied, however, with this, he being sorely pressed for money by reason of his extravagances, and being utterly devoid of principle, determined to sell his wife's honour. For this purpose, Mr. Cibber, hideous and worthless, introduced to her house a young gentleman of comely mien, who was possessed of station and fortune. The young gentleman's name was William Sloper, but Cibber presented him as Mr. Benefit, adding that the youth 'was a romp and a good-natured boy.' Soon after Mrs. Cibber making the acquaintance of Sloper, her spouse, affectionately anxious to give her change of air, took lodgings at Kensington for her and himself and the young gentleman, whose good nature Mr. Cibber tested by borrowing from him sums amounting to four hundred pounds. They had been but a little while established at Kensington when, unfortunately, Mr. Cibber found himself called away on pressing business to France. When he subsequently returned, he refused to occupy his former lodgings, but was obliging enough to hire a bed for himself at the 'Blue

Green Inn,' not far removed. When he had first supped comfortably with his wife and their mutual friend, he retired nightly to this inn, being conducted thither by a man with a lanthorn and a candle. Next morning he returned to breakfast with them. For the accommodations, both at the lodgings and the inn, young Sloper freely paid, being a good-natured boy and, moreover, a romp.

Now Mrs. Cibber, seeing her husband's baseness, despised him heartily, and was too spirited to admit of an arrangement by which her lover was heavily mulcted of his money, whilst her infamous spouse was spared the censure of the world. She therefore eloped with Sloper, whom she had learned to love. This was a movement Mr. Cibber had not expected, and it was now plain to him that he must pose before the town as an outraged husband whose friendship had been vilely abused. The *rôle* has frequently been played since then with more or less success. He therefore, accompanied by Mr. Fife, a sergeant in the Guards, set off in a coach for Burnham, the place where Sloper was staying, in order to rescue his wife. Entering her lodgings whilst she and her friend were at breakfast, Cibber and the sergeant of the Guards carried her away, whilst Sloper cursed many oaths and called Theophilus a villain. As she was being taken to the coach, her lover walking beside her, she put her hand in her pocket and gave him a watch, on which he cried out 'twas well remembered, as the rascal would have had it else. When they came to the inn at Slough, Cibber and his wife rested there, and next day he drove her across country, fearing she might be rescued by her lover, and entering the town next evening, he placed her at the 'Bull Head Tavern,' near Clare Market, under the care of Mr. Stint, candle-snuffer

at Covent Garden play-house. Presently her brother, Mr. Arne, came, and he called out to Mr. Stint, and besought him to let his sister go with him, saying he would take care of her; but the candle-snuffer refused, making answer, 'I shall not betray the trust which was placed in me.' Then, not being admitted, Arne gathered together a great crowd from the neighbouring market, to the number of over one hundred, and broke into the house, and beat the snuffer of candles severely, injuring him in the body, and tearing the clothes from his back, which was left naked. In this manner Mrs. Cibber was rescued, and restored to her friend, under whose protection and care she lived happily till her death.

Cibber, seeing in this a cause for the recovery of damages, took an action against Sloper for eloping with his wife, whereby he, sad to relate, 'lost her company, comfort, society, and assistance.' The damages claimed for such loss were estimated at the round sum of five thousand pounds. The foolish bathos indulged in by the gentlemen learned in the law, who conducted the case, is quite on a par with that which distinguishes many members of that eminent profession at the present day. The wise Solicitor-General, one Mr. Strange, who stated the plaintiff's case, declared, in a voice choked by emotion, that no sum of money could compensate for the injury done to Mr. Cibber, which was of the most tender concern to his peace of mind, happiness, and hopes of posterity; for no sum of money could restore that tranquillity of mind which had now deserted him for ever. The learned Mr. Strange, however, took an opportunity of hinting that five thousand pounds would be regarded by his client as a slight recompense to his deeply-wounded honour. The observations 'upon the plaintiff being a player' made by the eloquent

gentleman are wonderfully quaint, and moreover amusing, when read by the light of modern times. He was fully aware that in a matter of this nature 'players were considered as not upon the same footing with the rest of the subjects.' It was true the plaintiff was a player, *but* he was also a gentleman, being well descended, and having had a liberal education; his father was well known to all gentlemen who delighted in theatrical entertainments to be of the first figure in that profession, and an author too; and the plaintiff's grandfather was the best statuary of his times; and the plaintiff, by the mother's side, was related to William of Wykeham, and, in right of that pedigree, had received his education upon a foundation of government. The learned gentleman likewise dwelt upon Mr. Cibber being 'endowed with the finest sense of morality,' and became eloquent on the mischievous consequences of suffering a man to commit such an injury to the married state without being obliged to repair it in damages. The jury, however, duly appreciated Mr. Cibber's fine sense of morality and Mr. Strange's bathos, and awarded ten pounds damages to the ill-looking vagabond Theophilus Cibber.

On the 22nd of September, 1742, Covent Garden Theatre opened for the season with 'Othello,' Mrs. Cibber playing Desdemona, it being 'her first appearance on that stage.' The parts were 'all new dressed and the theatre new decorated,' as the bills informed the public. A few nights later, Peg Woffington and Garrick appeared respectively as Sylvia and Captain Plume, and so great a crowd was expected that it was announced 'No persons will be admitted behind the scenes but those who have silver tickets.' The lines of carriages and chairs which had stretched from Temple

Bar to Whitechapel when Garrick had played at Goodman's Fields, now blocked up Drury Lane and its adjacent streets. Night after night the theatre was crowded to excess, and nothing could exceed the delight and applause when the two reigning favourites appeared in the one piece. It became plain, even to Quin, who still thundered and strutted at Covent Garden, that the days of the old school were numbered. Yet he was not willing to quietly lay down his arms and own himself defeated in the combat with this young David, but plucked up courage enough to play Richard the Third on the same night as Garrick. An account of the marked difference between the champion of the old school and the new is given us by one who saw both play later on in Rowe's 'Fair Penitent,' on the stage of Drury Lane. Garrick took the part of Lothario, Quin of Horatio. Upon the rising of the curtain the latter presented himself in a green velvet coat embroidered down the seams, an enormous full-bottomed periwig, rolled stockings, and high-heeled square-toed shoes. 'With very little variation of cadence, and in a deep, full tone, accompanied by a sawing kind of action, which had more of the senate than of the stage in it, he rolled out his heroics, with an air of dignified indifference which seemed to disdain the plaudits that were bestowed on him,' writes Richard Cumberland in his 'Memoirs.' 'But when I beheld little Garrick, young and light and alive in every muscle and in every feature, heavens, what a transition! It seemed as if a whole century had been stepped over in the transition of a single scene; old things were done away, and a new order at once brought forward, bright and luminous, and clearly destined to dispel the barbarisms and bigotry of a tasteless age, too long attached to the prejudices of custom,

and superstitiously devoted to the illusions of imposing declamation.'

Early in this season Garrick produced 'King Lear,' which he had attempted at Goodman's Fields, and subsequently played during his Dublin engagement. As an instance of the pains which he took in the study of his characters it may be mentioned, that when he first played in this tragedy, he had requested his old friend Macklin, and Dr. Barrowly, a physician by profession, a dramatic critic by reputation, to sit in judgment on his performance. These worthy men accepted the pleasurable task, and with that conscientiousness which distinguishes friends delivered their opinions next morning. He was dressed very appropriately for King Lear, they admitted, but he did not sufficiently enter into the infirmities of a man four score and upwards. Then in the repetition of the curse he began too low and ended too high, the reverse of which would, they argued, have a better effect; and in the fourth act he had not dignity enough, and his voice was too loud. To all of which Garrick listened with patience, nay, he even made notes of their remarks, and, thanking them, said he would not again play the part till he had profited by their judicious hints. When in due time he again appeared as King Lear, his friends, who once more acted as his critics, assured him he played the part rather worse than before. They were good enough to offer him their services at rehearsal, which he declined on the plea that so much graciousness would embarrass him. On his third appearance as the sad old man his critics were of opinion that he had sufficiently profited by their advice, and praised him accordingly. The announcement that he was again to play the part with the Woffington as Cordelia, caused a thrill of ex-

citement in every coffee-house and tavern in town; nor on the night when the Drury Lane curtain fell on the last act of the tragedy was his audience disappointed.

O'Keeffe tells us his exclaiming, in the bitterness of his anger, 'I will do such things—what they are I know not,' and his sudden recollection of his own want of power were so pitiable as to touch the heart of every spectator. The simplicity of his saying, 'Be these tears wet—yes, faith,' putting his finger to the cheek of Cordelia, was exquisite. Never had the sorrows, rage, and madness of the king been so portrayed, and never had Garrick more forcibly impressed the public. 'The curse,' says Macklin, 'exceeded all imagination, and had such an effect that it seemed to electrify the audience with horror. The words, "kill—kill—kill," echoed all the revenge of the frantic king, whilst he exhibited such a sense of the pathetic on discovering Cordelia as drew tears of commiseration from the whole house. In short, he made it a *chef-d'œuvre*, and a *chef-d'œuvre* it continued to the end of his life.' Garrick had carefully studied the expressions and signs of madness which he so skilfully represented from one who had suddenly lost his reason through a dreadful affliction. This unhappy man had, whilst dandling his only child, a little girl of whom he was passionately fond, at his dining-room window, let it drop into the flagged area, when it was instantly killed. His shrieks summoned the household, who by way of assuaging his grief, placed the lifeless body of the child in his arms. From that moment his senses fled for ever. But for years he almost daily rehearsed the terrible tragedy; seizing a pillow, he would dandle and caress it, then let it suddenly drop, when he gave vent to the most heart-piercing shrieks, which gradually subsided to low,

tremulous moans. From this study Garrick had taken his hints for the representation of King Lear's madness over the body of Cordelia which had electrified his audience.

CHAPTER VIII.

Peg Woffington and Garrick keep House—Old Colley Cibber—Drinking tea at Peggy's Rooms—Fielding, Quin, Mrs. Porter, Foote, Johnson, and Macklin—The Woffington and Garrick Part—Polly Woffington, Lord Tyrawley's Amour—George Anne Bellamy—Acting in a Barn—Captain Cholmondeley's Marriage—Violette the Dancer—Her Love for Garrick—Marriage—Peg Woffington goes to Covent Garden—Her Dublin Engagement.

ON their return from Dublin, Peg Woffington and Garrick kept house together in Bow Street, when it was agreed between them that they should alternately defray the monthly expenses. Here they entertained the first wits of the day, and it soon became a standing joke that a more hospitable board was always spread before their visitors on the month when it was Peggy's turn to pay the reckoning. What illustrious men and women, whose names are now as household words in our mouths, assembled in her rooms; what wit and repartee were exchanged round her board! Here came Samuel Foote, the prince of wits, the most perfect of mimics, whom Garrick feared in secret, and conciliated in public; and burly-figured Samuel Johnson, now a writer for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, who likewise feared Foote, but chuckled heartily over the jokes he made at Davy's expense; and Charles Macklin, who had always an excellent story to tell, and told it with the humour native to his race; and Mrs. Porter, who had played to

Queen Anne, and who now delighted in meeting the young generation of players who were carrying the town before them; and Henry Fielding, who just at this time had produced his comedy 'The Wedding-Day,' with but little success. And likewise came Dr. John Hoadly (son of the right reverend bishop), a chaplain in the household of the Prince of Wales, and, as became one who held such position, a play-writer. It was here, in the Woffington's lodgings, as he mentions in his letters, that he read Garrick his farce, 'The Force of Truth.' Another playwright also frequently visited these pleasant apartments in Bow Street, old Colley Cibber, an antiquated beau, dramatic author, retired player, ex-manager, and most execrable laureate, at your service. Watch him as he enters Garrick's lodgings; his ponderous wig falls upon the shoulders of his velvet coat, richly embroidered at the seams and at the flaps; his shrunken shanks are clad in silken stockings; his feet [illegible] high-heeled, silver-buckled shoes; his thin [illegible] are adorned with precious stones, and as he [illegible] gold-laced hat above his heart, and makes a [illegible] Mistress Woffington, with whom 'tis whis- [illegible] in love, there is a world of grace in his movements. His thin, sharp features, aquiline nose, bright small eyes, and great plumage-like wig, together with his solemn strutting air, give him the appearance of some grotesque bird, at once venerable and vindictive-looking. Amongst all the actors of the old school there is not one so slow to admit the merits of Garrick's powers, and old Colley's sharpest words are continually hurled at young Davy's head.

Let us picture to ourselves a few of the Woffington's friends—Ryan, Fielding, Mrs. Porter, and of course Cibber and Garrick—drinking tea in Peggy's sitting-

room in Bow Street; a high-ceilinged, wainscoted apartment, with quaint engravings and concave mirrors hanging on the painted walls, silver sconces branching from the carved oak chimney-piece, and a polished floor on which the high heels of the company patter when they walk. Let us listen to their pleasant banter, their wit, their friendly bickerings and droll stories.

'Faith, I'm vastly sorry,' says old Cibber, with a wicked twinkle in his eye that belies his words addressed to Fielding, 'that your "Wedding Day" didn't bring you more pleasure and profit.'

'Much obliged to you, Mr. Cibber,' says the unsuccessful dramatist, 'but the public taste has been spoiled for originality by the plagiarized rubbish forced down its throat for the last fifty years.'

'Ha, ha, ha!' laughs burly Quin, 'that's one for you, Mr. Cibber.'

The laureate drew out his box and daintily helped himself to a pinch of snuff.

'When,' said Garrick, by way of soothing him, 'may we hope to have another comedy from Mr. Cibber's pen?'

'Psh,' said the old man spitefully, throwing away the snuff he held in his dainty fingers. 'What is the use of my writing another comedy, when we have no actors to play it?' *

'It would be impossible indeed, sir,' said Garrick, with a malicious smile hovering on his lips, 'to get actors to play such absurd characters as "The Rival Fools."'—This was a comedy of Cibber's which had been a dead failure, and he now winced at its name, whilst the others laughed with a pleasant sense of enjoyment.

* Macklin's 'Memoirs,' p. 101.

'Now,' said the charming hostess from behind her tea-kettle, 'this is my kingdom, and here I rule supreme——'

'Madam,' said Cibber, rising from his high-backed chair, and bowing to her with courtly grace, 'madam, you rule supreme in all hearts.'

'Much obliged to you, sir,' said Peg, with one of her brightest smiles, 'but I was about to say that I won't have my subjects quarrel among themselves. We poor players are looked upon by one half the world as rogues and vagabonds, and by the other half as soulless puppets—why can we not regard each other with kindness?'

'True, ma'am,' says Mrs. Porter, her wrinkled face beaming all over with kindness.

'Speaking of puppets,' said Ryan, in his whistling voice, 'I'll tell you a story——'

'Ah, you often tell stories, Jimmy,' said Garrick.

'...ry of the great Betterton,' continued Ryan, ...ing the interruption. 'One day, being in com... with a rustic at Bartholomew Fair, he went to ... puppet show. The manager refused to take the money. "Mr. Betterton," says he, "you are a fellow-actor—walk in and see my company perform and welcome, sir." The rustic, who had never before been within a booth or play-house, expressed himself vastly delighted by the humour of the puppets. "Faith," he says, "they are such jolly fellows, I will drink with them." Betterton assured him they were but rags and sticks, but this the rustic refused to believe till he was taken behind the scenes, and saw the once merry company silent now, and laid pell mell in a box. On that same night Betterton took him to the theatre, and placed him in front of the stage by way of giving him

a great treat, as he and Mrs. Barry were to play in "The Orphan"; and, thought Betterton, if the fellow was amazed by the performance of puppets, how much more will he delight in good actors? When the play was over, Betterton met his friend. "Well," says he, "how liked you the entertainment?" "I don't know," replies Hodge, "but 'twas well enough for rags and sticks."'

'Gad!' said Garrick, 'the opinion of the rustic and of the great Mr. Johnson about us are much the same. What did he say the other day?' (and Garrick drew down his wig on his forehead, wrinkled up his face in an inimitable manner, and mimicked Johnson's voice to perfection), '"a player, sir, is a fellow who claps a hump on his back, and a lump on his leg, and cries I am Richard III. Nay, sir, a ballad singer is a higher man, for he does two things: he repeats and he sings, there is both recitation and music in his performance; the player only recites."' *

When they had all laughed at Garrick's imitation: 'Egad,' says Quin, 'I'll tell you what Lord Lincoln said to me the other day. "Quin," said he, "'tis the devil of a pity that a clever fellow like you should be a player." "Why?" says I, in great surprise. "Would you have me a lord?"'

'Good, good,' says Cibber, chuckling in great glee.

'Foote said a good thing last week to the same noble lord,' said Garrick. 'His lordship asked him to dine, and Foote went, daintily decked in lace and ruffles. As they entered the room, his lordship remarked to Foote that his handkerchief was hanging out of his pocket. "Thank you, my lord," said Foote, who had purposely designed this piece of foppery, and now

* Boswell's 'Johnson,' Edin. 1848, p. 556.

resented the remark. "Thank you; your lordship knows the company better than I do."'

'Ah, he is a witty dog,' remarks the Woffington. 'And, as I live, here he comes.'

'Speak of the devil——' says Quin.

'And you will mention the name of one of your most intimate friends,' Foote said, entering the room, and making his bow to those assembled. 'Your servant, Mrs. Woffington.'

'A cup of tea, sir?' said she; and in a moment he was by her side.

'Ah, Mr. Cibber,' said he, when he was seated, 'I am glad to see you looking so well.'

'Egad, sir,' the laureate answered, 'at my age 'tis well for a man if he can look at all;' and in the enjoyment of this apt speech, he shakes his head, until his wig in turn shakes the powder from its ponderous folds.

Presently comes a loud knocking at the door, afterwards a heavy step is heard in the hall, and Samuel Johnson enters, bobbing his scratch-wig in friendly salutation to all assembled. Then he seats himself close by Cibber, for whom he had no love. But the poet laureate thinks well of the learned Mr. Johnson, whom, by and by, he will consult regarding one of the wonderful birthday odes to royalty, which are the laughing-stock of the town, but which Cibber considers it his duty to grind out annually from the heavy mill work of his brain. In a little while the conversation turns on Macklin, whose head, Quin and Ryan avow, has been turned by the success of his Shylock, when suddenly up starts Foote, a merry twinkle in his eye, as if on mischief bent. By a mere effort of will, he rapidly changes the whole expression of his face; his

eyebrows seemed to stand like pent-houses over hi eyes; his manner assumes an air of vast importance.

'Now, madam,' he says, turning to the Woffington in the exact tones of Macklin, 'I, Charles Macklin, tell you there are no good plays among the ancients, and only one great one among the moderns, and that is th "Merchant of Venice," and there's only one man ca play it. Now, madam, you have been very attentiv and I'll tell you an anecdote of that play. Whe royal personage, who shall be nameless, witnessed performance of the Jew, he sent for me to his box, remarked, "Sir, if I were not the prince, ha—hum understand, I should wish to be Mr. Macklin." which I answered, "Sir, being Mr. Macklin, I do desire to be——"'

At this moment a voice interrupts Foote: 'No be damned if I ever said that;' and Macklin, amused by Foote's mimicry, had stood at the unheeded by the company for some time, enters t room amidst the laughter of all. Soon after, Mrs. Porter rises, and Cibber is ready to conduct her, great gallantry, to her chair.

'Pray, madam, do you carry firearms with you no said the old fellow, referring to an episode in her ca when she presented a pistol at the head of a high man who had demanded her purse whilst she dro her chaise to Hendon.

'No, no, Mr. Cibber,' said she, laughing and sha her head.

'Did you shoot the villain, ma'am?' asks Woffington.

'No, child; thank God, I didn't,' says she. 'Fo poor fellow told me he was driven to the roads to r the wants of a starving family.'

'And you voluntarily gave him your purse, ma'am?' says Johnson, with a look of approbation.

'And, moreover,' added Cibber, 'made him an honest man by finding out the truth of his story, and raising sixty pounds for him!'

'It was bravely done,' says the Woffington.

'But not more than you would have done, child,' she replies; and embracing her, she departs, leaning on Colley Cibber's arm.

It is now full time for Peggy and Garrick to prepare for the theatre, so Quin and Ryan take their leave, and Foote and Fielding depart for the 'Bedford,' where the former has many friends awaiting him, with some of whom he will presently sit in the front benches of the pit at Drury Lane, and play the part of a critic, with much amusement to himself and to those who may have the benefit of his remarks.

The connection between the Woffington and Garrick did not last more than a couple of years. Save in that art in which they both held superior rank, they had but little in common. The Woffington was impetuous, warm-hearted, and extravagant; whilst Garrick was cold, cautious, and economical to a degree that made him the butt of a thousand jests and witticisms. Boswell records that, whilst Johnson was drinking tea with them once, Garrick grumbled at her for making it too strong.

'Why,' said he, 'it is as red as blood.'

It was Garrick's month to pay the household expenditure. Foote of course laid hold of this trait in the great actor's character, and cracked his jests upon it, till David waxed wrathful. One night, when they were both leaving the 'Bedford,' Garrick dropped a guinea, for which he vainly made diligent search.

'Where on earth can it have gone?' said Foote.

'To the devil, I think,' said the other, irritably.

'Ah! Davy,' replied the wit, 'let you alone for making a guinea go further than any one else.'

On hearing which the coffee-house gossips cackled with laughter, swore 'twas prodigiously fine, and repeated it all over the town next day. Yet, for all his saving, economy was a feature which he by no means relished in his friends; and one day, when Delane was telling Foote of Garrick's reflection on another man's parsimony, he wondered why David would not pluck the beam out of his own eye first.

'Why, so he would,' replied Foote, 'if he were sure of selling the timber.'

Notwithstanding all the disparity which existed in their characters, it seemed that, in the first glow of their friendship, Garrick had intended making this beautiful woman his wife. Macklin, who was for a time a close friend of both, and who at one period kept house with them, believed, from many conversations which he had with Peg Woffington, that she was assured Garrick would marry her. Arthur Murphy, who, as he says, enjoyed the pleasure of her acquaintance for years, heard her tell at different times that Garrick went so far as to try the wedding-ring on her finger; whilst Boaden asserts 'it was supposed that Garrick had really married her.' She loved him with all the strength of her passionate nature; hoped to spend her days by his side; to nestle his children at her breast; to share the meridian of his fame; to cheer the evening of his life; but Garrick, cautious, irresolute, and mercenary, hesitated till such love as he had ever felt for her drifted by his life.

At last the hour of their separation was at hand.

Macklin tells us how they parted. One night Garrick returned to his lodgings in Bow Street, and found the Woffington, who had not been playing that evening, waiting up for him. She greeted him with words that ring like music on the toiler's ears, when coming from the lips of a woman he loves; but her ways were quieter than usual, and in her eyes was a look of thought close kin to sadness.

'Peggy,' said Garrick, sitting down beside her in the shadow of the high, carved oak chimney-piece, 'are you not well?'

'I am.'

'But you seem dull.'

'I have been thinking much whilst here alone to-night.'

'And what were the thoughts that made you sad?' he asked, taking her hand in his.

'Those of my past life. David, I have been thinking of our marriage.'

'Oh! is that all?' he said, affecting to laugh lightly.

'All!' she answered; 'marriage means a great deal to a woman—a great deal to me.'

'Yes, yes, yes,' he replied, evasively, not knowing what to say, and feeling that her eyes were steadily fixed upon him.

'David,' she said, quietly, but in a tone that was almost imploring, 'when is it to be?'

'What?'

'Our marriage.'

'Oh! I can't say now; we'll talk of it another time,' he replied, rising to his feet, as if to end the conversation.

'Why not speak of it to-night?'

'Because—because I'm tired.'

She had tact, and saw no use pursuing the subject then, so she let it drop.

Next morning Garrick was restless, ill at ease, and unusually silent; it was now the Woffington's turn to ask him if all was well with him.

'Well with me,' he replied, as if disturbed from a train of thought. 'Yes—that is, no.' He did not look at her as he spoke.

On the stage she exhibited vivacious audacity and brilliant courage; in her home she betrayed a woman's hopes and fears.

'Will you not tell me what troubles you?' she said. 'You know a burden shared loses half its weight.'

'Well,' he said, looking down, 'I have been thinking, Peggy, that marriage would be the most foolish thing possible for both of us. It would only hamper us; the knowledge of the fact that we were chained together would make us miserable.'

The colour came into her face.

'And your promises?' she said.

'Were foolish,' he answered; then he went on rapidly, 'I shall always love you; let all go on as before——'

'Until the day comes at last when, grown tired of me, you will cast me off as your discarded mistress,' she said, rising to her feet, whilst a light came into her eyes that he recognized as a danger signal.

'Never, Peggy, I swear to you,' he said, anxious to soothe her at any cost.

'Sir, you are a liar!' she replied, her wrath bursting forth; her cheeks were aflame with humiliation, her eyes ablaze with indignation. 'You promised to make me your wife and I believed—and loved you; but, now that I know you as you are, I would not marry you if you were to ask me on your knees.'

'Peggy,' said he, nervously, 'don't be unreasonable. You know I love you.'

'Sir, don't insult me,' she answered, with spirit 'To-day I leave the house, and I shall never again willingly interchange a word with you except on business.'

So saying, she quitted the room, unwilling to hear another word from him. Believing she would not put her promises into execution when her passion cooled, he left the house, to find her gone on his return in the afternoon. She had left a parcel for him containing all the presents he had given her, with a written request that he might return such as she had presented him. Now, amongst those mementoes which the liberal and warm-hearted Woffington had given him, were a handsome pair of diamond shoe-buckles of considerable value. With these he was unwilling to part, and accordingly, when he returned her presents, the most considerable of all was missing. 'She waited a month,' says Macklin, 'to see whether he would return them; she then wrote him a letter delicately touching on the circumstance. To this Garrick replied, saying, "as they were the only little memorials he had of the many happy hours which passed between them, he hoped she would permit him to keep them for her sake.' Woffington saw through this, but had too much spirit to reply; and he retained the buckles to the last hour of his life.'

Garrick, according to Miss Bellamy's Memoirs, 'languished for a reconciliation,' but to this the Woffington would not consent. Soon after her departure from Bow Street she took up her residence at Teddington, when she sent for her sister Polly, for whose education in a French convent she had for years past generously

paid. It was her intention to bring her sister forward on the stage as an actress, and in order to test her abilities she got up a private performance of 'The Distressed Mother,' the important part of Hermione being allotted to Miss Polly, and Andromache to a young lady who rejoiced in the somewhat singular names of George Anne Bellamy, of whom the world was to hear overmuch for the next half-century. However, it was not only her names and subsequent career which were remarkable, but also the circumstances attending her entrance on the world's stage.

At the age of sweet fourteen, Miss Seal, who afterwards became the mother of George Anne Bellamy, eloped from a highly genteel boarding-school in Queen's Square with my Lord Tyrawley; an Irish nobleman remarkable for his gallantry, a soldier distinguished for his bravery, a man of parts remarkable for his wit. The young lady, who was captivated by his assiduous addresses, took up her residence with my lord at Somerset House, where she was treated with all honour and respect. These two had not dwelt within one house for quite twelve months, when the noble lord was ordered to join his regiment in Ireland: it being all the more necessary for him to depart, because his property in that country required his inspection. He therefore tore himself away from the lady whom he loved, and whom he left in a state of distraction.

Arriving in Ireland, he found his affairs in a desperate condition; an unjust steward having taken an opportunity of enriching himself and leaving his lordship poor indeed. There was clearly but one remedy by which he could retrieve his fallen fortunes, and that was by marriage. Here were all the elements of romance, ready for the strong hand of Fate to mould

into tragedy or comedy at her will. His affairs being urgent, my lord looked around him for a mate possessing wealth, and selected as the object of his choice Lady Mary Stewart, daughter of the Earl of Blessington, who had a fortune of thirty thousand pounds.

Though her ladyship was by no means handsome, her figure was described as genteel and her disposition engaging. To her, therefore, the noble lord paid his devoirs, postponing to tell the lady of his heart residing at Somerset House the necessity that had arisen for his marriage. Now it happened that my Lord Blessington had heard much of Miss Seal, who indeed called herself Lady Tyrawley; and, being anxious for his daughter's happiness, he wrote a vastly polite letter to the lady, asking if her connection with her lover had been broken off, informing her at the same time that his motive for this inquiry was his lordship's approaching marriage with my Lady Mary. Whereon the lady of Somerset House fell into a most violent rage, and in her fury sent back to Earl Blessington every letter she had received from her lover, each one containing ardent protestations of eternal love and fidelity. Amongst these she, in her blind fury, enclosed one she had just received, the seal of which she had not even broken. In this Lord Tyrawley confessed all to her, his loss of fortune, the entanglement of his affairs, his approaching marriage with one whom, he said, he would tarry with not a day longer than was necessary for him to receive her portion. Then he would immediately fly on the wings of love to her who alone possessed his heart. He added by way of detail that Lady Mary was ugly and foolish, but he had elected to marry her rather than a woman who was sensible and beautiful, lest these charms might wean him from the affection of one

who was his wife in the sight of heaven. At reading this very charming and expressive letter, my Lord Blessington was flung into a state of fury bordering on madness; when he recovered, he forbade his daughter ever to see the perfidious Tyrawley again. It is highly probable she would have obeyed, but that she had already privately married his lordship, who, not being quite certain as to the old earl's sentiment towards him, had at all hazards resolved in this manner to secure the lady, or rather her fortune. But even a guinea of this the earl now refused to give; whereon the bridegroom demanded and obtained a separation from his wife, and, returning to England, had sufficient interest to be sent at his request as minister to one of the foreign courts.

In the next scene of this romance, Miss Seal, late of Somerset House, became an actress, and went over to Dublin, where, her connection with Lord Tyrawley being well known, she caused some attention. Here she remained for several years. In the mean time her lover forgave her, frequently wrote to her, and pressed her to join him in Lisbon. To this she at last consented, and, arriving in that city, Lord Tyrawley, for reasons of his own, placed her in the family of a British merchant, where he occasionally visited her. Whilst in Lisbon she met with an English gentleman, named Bellamy; who, struck with her charms and unacquainted with her situation, became enamoured of her, and solicited her hand. This she refused, until one day it came to her ears that my lord had an intrigue with a lady named Donna Anna, when, in a fit of jealousy, she accepted Bellamy's offer, married him, sailed with him for Ireland, and in a few months presented him, to his infinite surprise, with a daughter.

So ungrateful was he that he instantly abandoned her, and never saw her again. The child, which was named George Anne Bellamy, being Tyrawley's offspring, his lordship gave instructions to have her taken care of, sent her, when of proper age, to be educated in a French convent, and then handed her over to the charge of a lady of quality.

In the mean time, Mrs. Bellamy returned to the stage, and, as she had never exhibited any talent in that line, she was soon reduced to extreme poverty. This condition had been considerably hastened by the fact that a mere boy whom she had recently married—the son of Sir George Walter—had stripped her of all the valuables she possessed, and, dressing a companion of his in his wife's finery, set off with her to join his regiment at Gibraltar. Whilst in this state, she sought an interview with her daughter, and besought her to take up her residence with her; believing that, in such case, Lord Tyrawley would allow her the sum of one hundred a year, which he had stipulated to pay the lady of quality for George Anne's maintenance. Her daughter consented to the proposal, which, however, had not the result Mrs. Bellamy expected; for not only did he refuse her an allowance, but he wrote to England renouncing his daughter for ever.

At this period of her history, Peg Woffington met Mrs. Bellamy, whom she had formerly known in the Dublin theatre, and, with that ready generosity which was always a marked trait in her character, invited the unhappy woman and her daughter to stay at Teddington. This offer Mrs. Bellamy quickly accepted, and George Anne, being much of the same age as Miss Polly Woffington, was asked to take part in the performance which was to test the histrionic powers of

that young lady. A barn was fitted up as a theatre for the occasion, which was considered by Hermione and Andromache as one of vast importance. Peg Woffington and Mrs. Bellamy played the parts of attendants, the great Garrick undertook the character of Orestes, and the barn was crowded by people of the first fashion and quality in the neighbourhood. It was indeed a much more eventful performance for the two young girls who sustained the principal parts than even they imagined, for the beautiful blue-eyed Bellamy gave such proofs of her power as at once indicated her career, whilst charming Polly Woffington made a conquest of the Hon. Captain Cholmondeley's heart, and from that hour kept it through life till death. The captain was a staid man and good, who subsequently left the army to enter the Church; he was a younger son of Earl Cholmondeley, a nobleman excessively poor and proud. Walpole, in one of his pleasant epistles, tells us of a 'terrible disgrace' which befell his lordship 't'other night at Ranelagh. You know all the history of his letters to borrow money to pay for damask for his fine room at Richmond. As he was going in, in the crowd, a woman offered him roses—"right damask, my lord." He concluded she had been put upon it.'

After a short courtship, Captain Cholmondeley offered his heart and hand to Miss Polly, who, having already stolen the one, now willingly enough accepted the other. When the old earl, whose household goods had by this time been seized for debt, heard of this intended alliance, he broke out in great wrath; for not only was the object of his son's choice the sister of a player, but she had not a penny of fortune save whatever the actress in her generosity might allow her. He therefore posted off in great haste to see Peg Woffington,

in order to break off the match between the young people, if possible. Peg received him graciously, and by her soft words helped to turn away the first impetuous rush of his anger.

'They love each other, my lord,' she said, calmly, 'and I see for both a fair prospect of happiness.'

'Love and happiness, madam!' said he, as if much disgusted by the probability of such a future. 'Pshaw! let us speak sense; the fellow has not a penny save his pay, and this marriage will be their ruin.'

'I think, my lord,' she answered, 'that honest love sometimes saves lives from wreckage.'

'But to be plain, madam,' said he, 'my son is a man of quality, and might marry a fortune.'

'Whilst the girl he honours with his attentions is but the sister of a player,' she said. 'But, my lord, her name is spotless; she is by education a gentlewoman, and she shall not be dowerless.'

At hearing this latter piece of intelligence his lordship felt inclined to view the union with less horror. By degrees, indeed, he became so subdued under the influence of the Woffington's good sense and powers of fascination, that before he left he declared himself satisfied with the marriage he had come to break off. As he stood up to take his departure, he begged that dear Mrs. Woffington would forgive his being previously offended with his son's conduct.

'Previously offended!' repeated she. 'It is I who have cause for offence, my lord.'

'Why, dear madam, how can that be?' asked he, in great amazement.

'Because,' said Peggy, speaking with emphasis, 'I had but one beggar to support, and now I shall have two;' and she curtesied, to show the interview was at an end.

The marriage took place in 1746, and Mrs. Cholmondeley became 'a bright and airy' matron, living on terms of friendship with Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Oliver Goldsmith, and the celebrities of her age. The Woffington lived to see four children born to her sister, two of whom subsequently married into the noble houses of Townshend and Bellingham.

Now, in the same year that saw Mrs. Cholmondeley a bride, there arrived in town a young lady, fair to look upon, who in a little while filled that place in Garrick's life which he had once promised Peg Woffington she should occupy. This lady was the daughter of a respectable inhabitant of Vienna, and had been baptized Eva Maria Veigel. Destined to become a dancer by profession, she was received as a pupil by M. Hilferding, the celebrated *maître de ballet*, who, with others whom he taught, introduced her to the Court, in order to form a class for the royal children. Her grace and beauty attracted the attention of the Empress Maria Theresa, who desired she should change her name from Veigel (which in Vienna *patois* signifies Violet) to Violette. The admiration of the empress for the young dancer soon becoming shared by the emperor, Frederick I., her imperial Majesty, in order to prevent unpleasant consequences, hurried her off to London, furnishing her at the same time with favourable recommendations to English ladies of the first importance, amongst whom were the sister Countesses of Burlington and Talbot. Both of these ladies received Mademoiselle Violette—who, it may be remarked, arrived in the becoming costume of a page—with open arms, exerting, as Walpole says, 'their stores of sullen partiality and competition for her.' My Lady Burlington had her portrait painted, and carried her to the houses of her friends,

whilst my Lady Talbot introduced her to Frederick Prince of Wales, the doors of whose court were ever open to singers, fiddlers, and dancers. Now, His Royal Highness was politely supposed to be at once judge and patron of all the arts, and his opinions were always listened to, and his suggestions followed with that attention due to a princely connoisseur. It was an anxious moment, therefore, for the sister countesses when he pronounced judgment on the Violette. To their delight, he praised her in rapturous terms; but, in order that her movements might acquire a greater grace, he suggested that she should take lessons from his favourite, Denoyer, a French gentleman of rare talent, who, to his various professions of dancing-master, fiddler, and spy, added the more useful occupation of man midwife. This advice the Violette, being no courtier, neglected to follow, whereby she lost the favour and patronage of this remarkable prince.

With such support as that of the charming countesses, it was the easiest thing possible for her to get an engagement as dancer at the Opera House; all the more so as it was at this time governed by a company of lords and men of quality, headed by my Lord Middlesex, who devoted their elegant leisure to diverting the town in this way, to the ruination of their fortunes. Accordingly she made her *début* in October, 1746; on which occasion George II. was induced to lend his august presence, as likewise that of his fair, fat, German mistress, Madame Walmoden. The fashionable part of the town was thrown into a state of vast excitement over the first appearance of this dancer, who had brought with her the commendations of an empress. The Opera House was crowded by a most brilliant company; and there, at the wings, was my Lady Burlington, ready to hold

the Violette's pelisse whilst she was on, and wrap it round her when she came off the stage. Then when the Violette danced, it was declared that never had there been witnessed such a union of grace and beauty. The whole house rose in its enthusiasm, and applauded again and again until the charming *danseuse* came forward, the bright colour dying her olive cheek, her dark eyes glistening with excitement, and bowed her thanks repeatedly. In the Wentworth correspondence, my Lord Strafford thought it worth mentioning that the Violette 'surprised her audience at her first appearance upon the stage; for at her beginning to caper, she showed a neat pair of black velvet breeches, with rolled stockings; but finding they were unusual in England, she changes them the next time for a pair of white drawers.'

But, if she lost the patronage of Frederick, Prince of Wales, she gained favour in the eyes of the king, who, though ancient, was amorous, and could yet leer at a pretty woman, and stutter compliments in broken English in their ears. According to a rare and curious pamphlet entitled 'The Memoirs of St. James's,' printed by H. Carpenter in Fleet Street, about the year 1749, His Gracious Majesty conceived a most violent admiration for her, 'insomuch that, notwithstanding the pressing exigency of State affairs, he could not abstain so much as one evening from viewing the delightful performances of this new charmer, whose graceful personage and active accomplishments made such warm impressions on his old heart that they entirely obliterated all the affection that he had formerly conceived for the adorable Walmoden. So that at one moment the countess lost all the empire over his soul that she had maintained the possession of for ever so many years.

But such was the dexterity of His Majesty that, notwithstanding his hasty temper and choleric disposition, he found means to keep his new passion a secret from her for some time, to prevent those domestic feuds and strifes which he must be certain it would occasion, as soon as ever she should perceive the least spark of that flame which burnt so vehemently in his breast.' The king, therefore, employed a courtier, learned in the ways of love, to plead his cause; 'contenting himself with the sole pleasure of enjoying a sight of his charmer through his perspective glass, whenever she made her appearance in public; neither could the penetrating Walmoden take the least umbrage at his constant attendance at the opera, as she had always been a great promoter of that amusement.'

The Violette, however, would not listen to the pleadings of love made by the courtier on behalf of his king. Had it, she answered, been her desire to acquire wealth or rank at the expense of her reputation, it would have been in her power to have accepted of such long since. This was language foreign indeed to His Gracious Majesty's ears, and his disappointment was great. To make matters worse, the Walmoden came to hear of the king's inconstancy, when in a violent rage 'she flew to the king's apartments, and, meeting with him alone, upbraided him in the most bitter and opprobrious terms with his injurious treatment of her. He, no longer able to disguise the want of his former affection for her, much provoked at her coming to the knowledge of the affair, and more vexed at the lingering disappointments that had all along attended the course of his amour, was so incensed that, having no longer command over himself or his passion, nor any regard to her person or sex, he returned her volleys of upbraidings

with such smart blows as soon forced her to quit the chamber.'

The Violette was, however, carefully guarded by her patronesses, and for awhile all went well at the opera house; but she was soon destined to meet with some unpleasantness. Her refusal to take dancing lessons from Denoyer at the prince's special request was the means of bringing her into disgrace with that illustrious personage and his butterfly court; and my Lord Middlesex, seeing in her a rival to his mistress, the famous Nardi, quarrelled with the 'most admired dancer in the world,' seized this opportunity of involving the whole *ménage* of the opera in the altercation, dissolved the committee of noble lords and pretty gentlemen, and shut up the opera house. Great was the sensation which followed; for my lord not only closed the opera house, but his exchequer likewise, and declined to pay anybody, save indeed the composer Glück, who had highly diverted the town during the season by playing on a set of drinking glasses modulated with water. In reward for this ingenious talent Glück received a bad note from his lordship, whilst the principal man dancer was, by reason of his being left penniless, arrested for debt, when the poor, fantastic fellow was mercilessly thrown into durance vile.

But the Violette was not long without another engagement, and she accordingly made her appearance at Drury Lane on the 3rd of December, 1746; when she danced between the acts in company with Signor Salomon. Now the Violette had, some months before this, sat one night in the Countess of Burlington's box, and seen Garrick act, whereon she fell in love with him. When, a little later, the actor met her at one of the drawing-rooms of his fashionable friends, he had at first

sight returned her love; and from that hour Peg Woffington was forgotten. To woo the Violette was not, however, an easy matter; for my Lady Burlington was not pleased to regard him in the light of a suitor with favourable eyes. Garrick had not then reached the meridian of his fame; and the countess was of opinion that other suitors more eligible with regard to fortune and position might claim the hand of her beautiful *protégée*. There were indeed many men of the first rank and fashion ever ready to flutter around her wherever she went, and amongst these was William, fifth Earl of Coventry, whose admiration was plain to all, though his intentions were not quite so certain to the world. Horace Walpole tells an amusing story of my lord following the Violette, who was under my Lady Burlington's arm at a fine masquerade. Seeing this, the countess pulled off her glove, and moved her wedding-ring up and down her finger. 'Which,' says Walpole, 'it seems was to signify that no other terms would be accepted.'

A short time after, the same writer speaks of the Violette and Garrick being at 'the prettiest entertainment in the world,' given by the Duchess of Richmond, which was honoured by the presence of the King, the Princess Emily, the Duke of Cumberland, and his mistress, Peggy Banks. Two black princes, the Duke of Modena, the mad Duchess of Queensbury (dressed in a white apron and white hood), Lady Lincoln, Lord Holderness, 'all the Fitzes upon earth,' and everybody of fashion in town were likewise present. The gardens at Richmond House, Whitehall, sloped down to the Thames, on which lighters were moored. On these 'a concert of water music was performed,' after which a vast number of rockets were thrown into the air; then

wheels, ranged along the rails of the terrace, were let off, and fireworks discharged from the boats which covered the river; and finally there was the illumination of a pavilion on the top of the slope, in the bright glare of which the shore and the adjacent houses were seen thronged with spectators. The King and the Princess Emily 'bestowed themselves upon the mob,' whilst the Duke of Cumberland, with Peggy Banks, and pretty Mrs. Pitt, who was likewise supposed to share a corner of his royally capacious heart, sang 'God Save the King,' by way of setting a good example to the crowd. The observed of all observers was the Duke of Modena a charming creature, who, 'instead of wearing his wig down to his nose, to hide the humour in his face, has taken to paint his forehead white, which, however, with the large quantity of red that he always wears on the rest of his face, makes him ridiculous enough.' The Duchess of Richmond had asked Garrick, whilst Lady Burlington had brought the Violette, but the countess kept such a guard upon her *protégée* that the lovers could do no more than sigh and ogle each other the whole night. Presently Sabbatini, one of the Duke of Modena's court, came up to Walpole, and asked who all the people were.

'And who is that?' said he.

'C'est miladi Hartingdon, la belle fille du Duc de Devonshire.'

'Et qui est cette autre dame?'

It was a distressing question; after a little hesitation, Walpole replied, 'Mais c'est Mademoiselle Violette.'

'Et comment Mademoiselle Violette! J'ai connu une Mademoiselle Violette par example.'

Walpole begged him to look at Miss Bishop, a fashionable beauty.

But love, who laughs at locksmiths, no doubt behaves in the same impertinent manner to countesses; at all events, Garrick found opportunities of meeting the Violette in secret, when they exchanged vows of eternal fidelity. Long years afterwards, she used to tell how the great actor once dressed himself up as an old woman in order to convey her a letter. Unable to extinguish the love which had taken possession of the dancer's heart for Garrick, my Lady Burlington at last gave her consent to their union, and one fine morning early in June, 1749, the dancer and the actor were wedded. A marriage settlement of ten thousand pounds was made upon the bride; my Lady Burlington giving six thousand, and Garrick the remaining sum.

It happened that in 1747, a period at which Garrick had begun to give proof of his devotion to the Violette, he became joint patentee with Lacy, of Drury Lane Theatre, a circumstance especially disagreeable to the Woffington, whose engagement to Lacy obliged her to continue a member of his company for the coming season. Garrick, according to Macklin, felt likewise embarrassed; but what made the Woffington's 'situation more critical,' he adds, 'was the interference of Mrs. Cibber, Pritchard, and Clive, particularly the latter, who, being naturally quick as well as coarse in her passion, frequently drew upon her the sarcastic replies of Woffington, who made battle with a better grace and the utmost composure of temper.'

The first hour she was free, she therefore withdrew her services from Drury Lane, and went over to Covent Garden, under Rich's management, and during the first months of her engagement here [redacted] a fresh triumph by her personation of Lady Jane Grey in Rowe's tragedy of that name. Never, indeed, it was said, was

her beautiful face, her graceful figure, seen to better advantage, whilst her pathos moved the house to tears. Not satisfied with the success she had already gained, she, whilst the theatre was closed during the summer months of 1748, crossed over to Paris, in order to take lessons from the famous Mademoiselle Dumesnil. From the day when little Peg Woffington had learned French and dancing from Madame Violante, she had never failed to seize on every possible opportunity of improving herself; and now, not satisfied with her position as the first actress in England, she, recognizing the greater excellence of the Frenchwoman, resolved to become her pupil. The Dumesnil was at this time at the head of her profession in France. Her elocution was considered unsurpassed, her actions pronounced classical in their grace, and her manner the reflection of Nature, it being her chief study to identify herself with the character she personated. Peg Woffington studied her closely, and, on her return from Paris, played Veturia in Thomson's 'Coriolanus,' which the town vastly admired. Like a true artist, it was the ambition of her life to gain the public favour, and the result was that which usually attends such endeavours. In Veturia she sacrificed her beauty to the propriety of the character by painting her face with wrinkles and other unlovely signs of age; and again she frequently accepted inferior parts in plays, in order to strengthen the cast. Tate Wilkinson bears evidence that 'she never permitted her love of pleasure and conviviality to occasion the least defect in her duty to the public as a performer. Six nights in the week has been often her appointed lot for playing without murmuring; she was ever ready at the call of the audience, and though in the possession of all the first line of characters, yet she never thought

it improper or a degradation of her consequence to constantly play parts which are mentioned as insults in the country if offered to a lady of consequence.'

So much could not be said for other actresses of her time, who delighted in harassing the souls of their managers by the refusal of parts, as well as by convenient illnesses which were wont to attack them at their own sweet wills. This was, indeed, a constant practice not only with Mrs. Cibber, but with Quin and Barry likewise, who were at this time members of the Covent Garden company. At a few hours' notice they frequently sent word that they were attacked with an illness, whereon the tragedies they were advertised to perform were substituted for the sprightly comedies in which Peg Woffington was always certain to draw a crowded house. Considering this treatment unjust, the latter protested against it; but this not having the desired effect, she threatened that, if it occurred again, she would likewise be seized by a convenient illness. Soon after it happened that Mrs. Cibber was announced to play Jane Shore, but almost at the last moment she declared herself too indisposed to act, and Peg Woffington was instead announced to perform Sir Harry Wildair; but just as the doors of the playhouse were opened, she despatched a message to the manager that she also had suddenly been taken ill, and would be unable to play that evening. Therefore the only thing which could be done was to substitute another comedy. This the remaining members of the company performed so badly that the audience became incensed to a degree, and resolved to punish the offending absentees in general for their capricious conduct, and Peg Woffington in particular for having disappointed them on this special occasion. Accordingly, when a couple of nights

later, she appeared as Lady Jane Grey, for the first time in her life she was received with a storm of disapprobation. She stood still a moment speechless from surprise, when the audience bade her ask pardon.

'Whoever saw her that night,' says Tate Wilkinson, who tells the story in his interesting memoirs, 'will own they never beheld any figure half so beautiful since. Her anger gave a glow to her complexion, and even added lustre to her charming eyes She behaved with great resolution, and treated their rudeness with glorious contempt. She left the stage, was called for, and with infinite persuasion was prevailed upon to return. However, she did, walked forward, and told them she was then ready and willing to perform her character, if they chose to permit her; that the decision was theirs, *on* or *off*, just as they pleased—it was a matter of indifference to her. The *ons* had it, and all went smoothly afterwards.'

She, however, attributed the origin of the storm to the contrivance of the manager, who took this means of frightening her against being ill at an inopportune moment. She therefore resented it as an insult, and refused to engage herself to him at the end of the season. The only other theatre opened to her in London was Drury Lane, and, Garrick being manager of this, she was reluctant to serve under his generalship. At this crisis, she turned her thoughts to the playhouses of her native city, crossed the Channel, and was engaged by Tom Sheridan, father of the famous dramatist, for the season of 1751, at a salary of four hundred pounds.

CHAPTER IX.

Thomas Sheridan, the Manager—Letter to Garrick—Becomes a Manager—Conditions of the Playhouse—A Theatrical Riot and its Result—Dublin before the Union—Lionel, Duke of Dorset, at the Castle—Diversions of the Town—High Life and Low—Mrs. Butler, Miss Bellamy, and David Garrick—A Strange Love Letter—Mrs. Butler's Present.

THOMAS SHERIDAN, the manager of the Dublin theatres, with whom Peg Woffington now engaged, was a man whose name is intimately connected with the history of the Irish stage. He was son of the Rev. Dr. Sheridan, and godson of poor Dean Swift of witty memory. He had been educated at Westminster School, and had graduated at Trinity College, Dublin, where he was yet reading for a Fellowship when David Garrick paid his first visit to the Irish capital. Seeing the great actor perform, Sheridan was seized by stage fever, and, abandoning all idea of becoming a Fellow, he, to the intense disgust and indignation of his friends, left college and became a player. His appearance on the boards of Smock Alley Theatre on the 29th of January, 1743, in the character of Richard III., caused considerable sensation in the town. He was in the twenty-third year of his age; his appearance was handsome, his voice mellow and expressive, and his *début* was a decided success. He next played Othello, Hamlet, Cato, and Brutus, and his acting gained so rapidly on the town that he became the rage; his name was on all men's lips. 'So great,' says Davis, 'was his influence over the Dublin audience that Quin, who arrived in that city during the first warm glow of Mr. Sheridan's prosperity, with an intention to act a number of characters, and put a handsome sum of money in his pocket (a custom which he had often

practised), was obliged to quit the metropolis with disgust, if not in disgrace. He was told by the proprietors that all the acting days during the remainder of the winter were engaged to the new actor.'

His fame rapidly spread across the Channel, and Garrick wrote to him suggesting that he might share the honours of London town with him. Sheridan's interesting reply to this is preserved in the Garrick correspondence, dated April, 1743. He commences by apologizing for not having answered Garrick's obliging letter with greater speed, more than a fortnight having passed since he had received it, but during that time he had had three new characters to study as well as to play, Othello being one of them. He thanks him for his invitation to pass the summer with him at Walton, an enjoyment which the posture of his affairs will not permit. However, it is not improbable but that he may see London about the middle of May, as he intends to take a jaunt of pleasure there if all goes well. Then he continues: 'I have not as yet fixed any scheme for the next winter, but I have been offered such advantageous terms as will, I believe, detain me here till January at least. As to your proposal of our playing together, I am afraid I have too many powerful reasons against it; a well-cut pebble may pass for a diamond till a fine brilliant is placed near it, and puts it out of countenance. (A bold metaphor that; or, as Bayes says, "Egad, that's one of my bold strokes.") Besides, we should clash so much in regard to characters that I am afraid it is impossible we can be in the same house. Richard, Hamlet, and Lear, as they are your favourite characters, are mine also; and though you were so condescending to say I might appear in any part of yours, yet I question whether the town would bear to see a worse performer

in one of your characters in the same house with you, though they might endure him in another.' He has, however, a scheme to propose to Garrick, which at first view may seem a little extraordinary, but which, if rightly considered, might turn to the advantage of both; which is, that Garrick might be brought to divide his immortality with him, when, like Castor and Pollux, they might always appear in different hemispheres, or in plain English, they might divide the kingdoms between them, one playing one winter in Dublin and another in London: when they would be always new in both kingdoms, and consequently the more followed. 'But more of this,' he concludes, 'when I have the pleasure of meeting you. Pray remember my best respects to Mrs. Woffington. I should own myself unpardonable, in not having wrote to her, were it in my power: but I have been already sufficiently punished at the loss of so agreeable a correspondent, for, I assure you, I have a long time envied her pretty Chronon that pleasure: as soon as I have a moment to spare, I intend to do myself the honour to write to her.'

Sheridan in a short time quarrelled with the manager of Smock Alley, when he went over to the opposition playhouse in Aungier Street, and back again to the theatre in which he made his first appearance. Dissatisfied with the condition of things here, he crossed the Channel, and in March, 1744, played at Covent Garden in opposition to Garrick, to which theatre he succeeded in drawing great audiences. But two playhouses in Dublin could not find sufficient support; the proprietors therefore for once in a way acted wisely in agreeing that the one company should play alternately at each house, and, moreover, invited Sheridan to return, and take the full management. This he accepted, and

came back to Dublin within the same year as he had quitted it.

Now, at this period, the Dublin theatres had been fast hastening to ruin from bad management, the wretched acting of stock companies, and certain liberties allowed a portion of the audiences. Amongst the latter it was the habit of the undergraduates from the college to visit the theatre for the mid-day rehearsal, crowding the stage to such an extent that the players were surrounded by a circle of those precocious youths, who made audible comments not always of the most complimentary order, and cracked jests of the freest character. At night these 'college boys,' as they were called, together with the young men of quality about town, thronged behind the scenes, or crowded the green-room, where they diverted themselves according to their desires; flocking on to the stage when the curtain went up, where they lounged at the entrances, crossed before the footlights, and exchanged civilities or the reverse with the pit and boxes at their own sweet wills during the performance. These abuses Sheridan was determined to abolish; but time-honoured customs that admitted such pleasant liberties were not to be removed in a day, and for three years he struggled against them with but slight success. At last a circumstance occurred which, though at first fraught with discord and danger, resulted in gaining him the assistance of the town in preserving order and decency in his theatre.

It happened one night in January, 1747, whilst the comedy of 'Æsop' was being performed, a young man of quality named Kelly entered the theatre. This pretty fellow was much inflamed with wine, and was therefore in a mood to divert himself; for which laudable purpose he presently climbed over the spikes, with

which it was at that time found necessary to divide the orchestra from the pit. Getting on to the stage in this manner, he rushed into the green-room, where he met Mrs. Dyer, an actress of excellent character, whom he addressed in terms that obliged her and the other women present to fly to their respective dressing-rooms, to which he promptly followed them. Hearing the noise, Sheridan, who was in his private room, came out, and seeing Kelly was more merry than wise, ordered some of his men to carry him to the pit from whence he came. At this interference with his pleasure, the pretty young gentleman was mighty indignant, and, taking a basket from one of the orange women, who were then allowed to vend fruit in the pit, he, when Sheridan appeared, commenced to pelt him with oranges. So excellent was his aim, that one of them struck the visor the manager wore in his character of Æsop, and cut his forehead; on this Sheridan appealed to the audience. Kelly then stood up and informed him he was a scoundrel and a rascal, to which the manager replied he was as good a gentleman as he; those in the pit then obliged Kelly to sit down. But at the end of the play his spirit was up again; and, bent on mischief, he forced his way through the stage door, rushed to Sheridan's room, and told him he was a rascal and a scoundrel. By way of rewarding him for such information, the manager thrashed him soundly, and had him turned out of doors. With face sadly swollen and blood-smeared, and clothes torn and soiled, this young gentleman, alas! no longer pretty, betook himself to the 'Brown Bear Coffee-House,' where those of his kind most did congregate. To them he told a lamentable tale, garnished with such additions and improvements as were best calculated to rouse the ire sleeping in their ruffled

adorned breasts. Sheridan, quoth he, had said he was as good a gentleman as any in the house; and when he (Kelly), burning with exasperation, had gone behind the scenes to avenge this insult, he had been held hand and foot by the manager's servants, whilst the said manager beat him. Then, said they, this shall not be. No scoundrel play-actor shall be allowed to beat a pretty gentleman with impunity. If such were permitted, why, the end of the world might be expected any day. Therefore, great was their indignation, and fervent their vows of vengeance, which not only threatened Sheridan, but those who should take his part. A theatrical storm was therefore promptly expected. A few days later, Sheridan was advertised to play Horatio in 'The Fair Penitent,' upon which he received several letters, cards, and messages from his friends, begging him not to venture outside his door that evening, and to have his house well guarded.

This advice he complied with, fortunately for himself, for the theatre was that night packed with Kelly's friends. When it was announced that Sheridan was unable to appear, about fifty of those, with Kelly at their head, rose in the pit, and with a cry of rage and disappointment, scrambled on to the stage; from thence they immediately rushed to the green-room, and the dressing-rooms, forcing open all doors that were locked, in eager pursuit of their prey. But the manager was not to be found. They next proceeded to the wardrobe, and, by way of feeling if he were in any of the chests or presses, they ran their swords through the valuable costumes these contained. They next set out for his house in Dorset Street, but seeing it was guarded, and believing safety the better part of valour, they retired, harbouring their vengeance for another occasion. Next

day nothing was spoken of all over Dublin but this attempted outrage. The citizens had always a keen interest in matters theatrical, and this subject of the hour was regarded by one and all almost as a matter of personal interest. The town was therefore divided into two parties, unequal in number, it must be confessed; the majority being in favour of Sheridan. For a month the theatre was closed, during which period letters relative to the quarrel were published almost daily in the *Dublin Journal*, whilst pamphlets teemed from the press. The decorum of the stage and the defence of morality were at stake one party asserted; whilst the other complained of the infringement of time-honoured rights, and the insult given to a man of quality. The riot grew more bitter daily, and spread from the city all over the kingdom.

At the end of the fourth week the greater part of the town declared it would no longer be deprived of its usual and favourite amusement. Sheridan was therefore requested to open the theatre, when he was assured he would receive powerful protection. He accordingly in a short time announced the performance of 'Richard III.,' his favourite character. No sooner were the doors of the theatre opened, than the house was filled by Sheridan's friends, to the vast surprise of the rioters, who arrived late, and in comparatively small numbers. They, however, considered themselves sufficient to create a disturbance; and when Sheridan appeared, they set up a cry of 'Submission, submission, submission, off, off, off,' which was answered by a counter-cry of 'No submission; on with the play.' At this, a citizen of fair renown, named Charles Lucas, stood up in the pit, and claimed a hearing. Every person in the house, he said, came to receive the

entertainment promised in the bill, for which he paid his money. The actors were therefore the servants of the audience, and under their protection during the performance; and he was of opinion that every insult or interruption given them in the discharge of their duty was offered to the public. In conclusion, he would ask those who were in favour of the decency and freedom of the stage to hold up their hands, from which sign it might be learned if the play was to proceed or not. Amidst shouts of applause, more than two-thirds of those present held up their hands, at which the rioters left the house, and the play ended peacefully. But the Kellyites were not yet suppressed; their threats of vengeance continued; they were determined to ruin the manager. By way of indicating the spirit which animated them, they set upon Charles Lucas two nights after his speech, and beat him severely whilst he was peaceably walking through Sackville Street. Next day he had an advertisement printed and distributed all over the town, offering a reward of five pounds for the arrest of a number of disorderly persons, in the garb of gentlemen, who had assaulted him in a cowardly manner.

Sheridan, seeing the rioters were yet bent upon injuring him, closed the theatre again, and it was not for some weeks later that he once more ventured to open it, when 'The Fair Penitent' was announced to be performed for the benefit of the Hospital for Incurables. The governors of this institute, who were all persons of consequence, assured the manager they would take it on themselves to defend him from danger or insult, and several ladies of quality promised their presence on the occasion. When the night came, a brilliant house assembled; the governors of the hospital

were all present, carrying white wands; ladies of the first fashion filled the boxes, and over a hundred of them had to be accommodated with seats on the stage. It was, however, noticed that about thirty young men had taken possession of the middle part of the first three benches in the pit. When the curtain rose, Sheridan was in due state ushered on the stage by some of the governors, when he came forward to speak a prologue. No sooner, however, had he appeared than the thirty men in front, who it was now seen were all armed, rose up in a body and authoritatively ordered him off. The manager bowed to the house and withdrew, when a violent argument between these men and the governors ensued. Amongst the latter was a student from the college in his bachelor's gown, who spoke with great warmth in Sheridan's defence, in return for which one of the rioters struck him with an apple, and called him a scoundrel. At this insult offered to one of their body, several of the undergraduates who were present flew like feathered Mercury to the college, and in a short time returned with a number of their fellow-students, all armed. Meanwhile the rioters, seeing the 'college boys' had rushed from the house, guessed their errand, and quickly left the pit. The undergraduates were therefore disappointed of their prey, but, their blood being up, they were not easily pacified. They had during this disturbance remained neutral, but now they were glad to take this opportunity of one of their body being insulted to espouse the cause of a man who had left old Trinity to become a player. They had therefore a double incentive in punishing the rioters. Not finding them at the theatre, they searched every club, coffee-house, and tavern in the town, but in vain. They then

returned to the college, baffled for the present, but more determined on vengeance than ever, and held a council of war, which lasted all night. Next morning, when the gates were opened, out they flocked to a man, armed and ready for combat, and, separating into various bodies, went in search of the rioters at their divers residences. They were informed that the man who had fired the apple had but just come up from the country; but not being aware of his abode, they were compelled to inquire at lodging-houses and hotels for him, and it was not until eleven o'clock that he was led a captive inside the college gates. The city was meanwhile in a tumult of excitement; the guardians of the peace seldom interfered with the students; the shop-keepers, fearing a general riot, had not opened their doors; business was suspended; and many of the rioters, conscious of the search which was being made for them, rushed in fear of their lives to the Court of Chancery, where the Chancellor was sitting, and besought his protection.

Having secured the principal offender, a great number of the undergraduates next sallied forth to look for a young officer, a gay jack-a-dandy, who had likewise made himself specially offensive. It was known that he lived in his father's house in Capel Street, which was found by the students barricaded and guarded. These obstacles but made them more desperate, and afforded them a pleasant, though dangerous incentive to their efforts. A raid was promptly made, a skilful breach effected, the offender seized, placed in a hackney coach, and, amidst loud huzzas, hurried within the walls of Trinity. Then came the punishments. The first offender was compelled to travel on his bare knees round all the courts of the

college, and to repeat a form of humble apology prepared the previous night; the second offender was, by reason of his holding the king's commission, allowed to read the apology standing. Both were glad to escape with a chastisement which, if humiliating, at least mercifully left them whole bones.

The theatre was now ordered by the Lords Justices to be closed, and the next scene of this eventful drama was laid in court; Sheridan having taken an action against Kelly for assault, and damages done to the theatrical wardrobe; the manager in return being indicted for assault and battery. Sheridan was tried first, but so clearly and satisfactorily was it proved he had been incited to a breach of the peace, that the jury, without leaving their box, acquitted him. Then came Kelly's turn. The first witness called was the prosecutor. The chief counsel for the defence rose up with that air of dignity becoming one learned in the law, and said he vastly desired to see a curiosity. He had seen a gentleman soldier, likewise a gentleman tailor (laughter in court), but he had never yet seen a gentleman actor (great laughter). On which Sheridan turned to him calmly, and said, 'Sir, you see one now.' An answer which was received with such prodigious applause that it dawned on the learned gentleman he had made a mistake. Justice Ward tried the case, which ended by Kelly being sentenced to three months' imprisonment, and fined five hundred pounds. This undreamt-of result fell like a thunderbolt on Kelly. At the commencement of the suit it was rumoured that a subscription would be made to defray his law expenses, but in the hour of trial his friends deserted him, and left him to meet his fate alone. A week's imprisonment seemed to have the wholesome effect of

bringing him to his senses, for at the expiration of that period he, with words of sorrow and humility, applied to Sheridan that he might petition the court in favour of lightening his sentence, which this man, whom he had called a scoundrel, accordingly did, with such good effect that the fine was remitted, and, Sheridan further pledging himself as bail for the prisoner's future good conduct, that young gentleman was restored to liberty once more.

Dublin in the days before the Union was the gay capital of a prosperous nation, and boasted of a society at once cultured, fashionable, and brilliant. A native parliament sat in College Green; Irish peers and commons of note dwelt in the city; and the Lord-Lieutenant, then surrounded by regal pomp and circumstances of state, held court at the castle. Irish society, smaller in its circle than that which revolved round the Court of St. James's, was not less brilliant; the beauty of its women was proverbial, the sprightliness of its men characteristic. By nature a pleasure-loving people, their days and nights were chiefly devoted to the pursuit of amusement; and the diaries and memoirs of those who formed part of the gay and goodly crowd that held revelry in the middle of the last century in the Irish capital, present us with a series of vivacious and interesting pictures.

The chief and most fashionable promenade in the city was St. Stephen's Green, which was to the residents of the Irish capital what the Mall was to Londoners. Situated in the centre of the town, it was planted with trees, and boasted broad and shady walks, where ladies of quality and men of fashion disported themselves in the mornings. Having taken the air here, they visited and went to dinner betimes. Then in fair weather they

drove in great coaches or rode on horseback to the Phœnix Park, a piece of ground which, with its delightful wood and turfy ground, rivalled St. James's or Hyde Park. Moreover, it commanded an agreeable prospect of the Dublin mountains, from which healthful breezes blew. In the midst of the wood, in view of the column surmounted by the fabulous bird which gives its name to the park, the gift of Lord Chesterfield, a circular-shaped space was cleared, where society met and talked of routs and ridotti, plays and concerts, its neighbours' shortcomings, and all the delightful scandal of the town.

The polite Lord Chesterfield, just mentioned, during his reign as Lord-Lieutenant, a few years before the Woffington's second visit to her native city, had left behind him reminiscences of costly splendour that equalled, if not eclipsed, the glory of St. James's. He had added to the Castle a new room, which was allowed to be the most magnificent in the three kingdoms. In this he held balls, to which the nobility of the land were bidden, where, when dancing was over, says Victor, quaintly enough, 'the company retired to an apartment, to a cold supper, with all kinds of the best wines and sweetmeats. The whole apartment was most elegantly disposed and ornamented with transparent paintings, through which was cast a shade-like moonlight; flutes and other soft instruments playing all the while, but, like the candles, unseen. At each end of the building, through which the company passed, were placed fountains of lavender water that diffused a most grateful odour through this fairy scene, which surpassed everything of the kind in Spencer, and proved not only a fine feast for the imagination, but after the dream, for our sensualities, by the excellent substantials at the sideboard.'

The luxurious earl had been succeeded for a brief while by my Lord Harrington, who in turn gave place to Lionel, Duke of Dorset; his Grace arriving in Ireland towards the autumn of 1751, in the same month as Peg Woffington made her appearance at Smock Alley playhouse. The sharp-tongued Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, who seldom indeed had a good word to say of any one, writes in a charmingly characteristic manner of his Grace. 'Such a wretch as he is I hardly know,' says the eccentric duchess, 'and his wife—whose passion is only for money—assists him in his odious affair with Lady Betty Jermyn, who has a great deal to dispose of.' Wretch or no wretch, he was, for a time at least, popular in the Irish capital; and exceeding great was the throng of courtiers that flocked to the Castle drawing-rooms during his reign. Mrs. Delany, in one of her letters, pleasantly gossips of going to the Vice-regal Court one birthday in her coach, whilst a friend of hers, whom she styles Madame, went thither in her sedan, 'with her three footmen in Saxon-green, with orange-coloured cockades,' marching in step before her. 'Can you tell why she desired me to go with her?' asks Mrs. Delany, giving way to a bit of feminine pique. 'I can. She was superb in brown and gold and diamonds; I was clad in purple and white silk I bought when last year in England; and my littleness set off her greatness. After half-an-hour's stoppage on the way, caused by the vast number of coaches and chairs blocking the thoroughfares leading courtwards, this blaze of colour reached the Castle, and took its way to the drawing-room, where the duke and duchess came, 'half-an-hour after one, very graceful and princely. The duchess had a blue padnasoy, embroidered very richly with gold; and there was a great deal of handsome finery.' Presently a

band and choir, under the direction of Dubourg, gave a birthday song in honour of royalty, which was vastly admired; and in the evening a ball was held in the old beef-eaters' hall, an apartment capable of holding seven hundred persons.

The crowd assembled on this occasion was so prodigious that the ladies were seated on an amphitheatre at one end of the room in rows one above another, so that the last row almost touched the ceiling, presenting an appearance which reminded some of the gentlemen of 'a Cupid's paradise in a puppet show.' In this vast room, with its blaze of lights and shining floor, women with narrow waists, bare breasts, and far-extending hoops, danced stately minuets with men in powdered wigs, velvet coats, and high-heeled shoes; courtesying, undulating, advancing, and retreating with slow pace and a world of grace to the measured music discoursed by French horns. In an apartment at the end of a suite sat the Duchess of Dorset, playing basset with some dowagers whose dancing days were over; whilst in the rooms adjoining were quadrille parties, where those who had danced might saunter up and down and look on at the games. Finally, the Duke and Duchess, who had been vastly obliging all the evening, led the way to supper, which was laid in the council-chamber. 'In the midst of this apartment was placed a holly tree, illuminated by a hundred wax tapers; round it was placed all sorts of meat, fruit, and sweetmeats; servants waited and were encompassed round by a [illegible] to which the company came by turns to take what they wanted. When the doors were first opened, the hurly-burly is not to be described: squalling, shrieking, all sorts of noises; some ladies lost their lappets, others were trod upon, and poor Lady Santry almost lost her breath in the

scuffle, and fanned herself two hours before she could recover herself enough to know if she was dead or alive.'

But it was not only at the Castle that great receptions were held and lively balls given. The stately and magnificent mansions of the nobility, faced with sparkling granite native to the Wicklow hills, and adorned by the genius of foreign artists, which retain traces of their beauty to the present day, though converted into schools or let in tenements, were in those times the scenes of constant revelry. My Lord Grandison delighted in assembling the wit and beauty of the capital round a board heavy from the weight of golden candelabra and services of silver. Lord Mountjoy gave balls that were the talk of the city; his lordship was a gay man, though not a brave, for when he quarrelled with old Norse the gambler, my lord refused to fight him, whereon the man who loved cards, by way of having revenge in a fashion truly Hibernian, went home and cut his own throat—a fact that by no means prevented Lord Mountjoy from diverting himself as usual. Then Lady Doneraile had famous quadrille-parties at her handsome mansion in Dawson Street; my Lord Strangford and his lady gave delightful concerts; and Bishop Clayton's wife, who loved this world well, opened the doors of her big mansion, with a front like Devonshire House, situated in Stephen's Green, every Wednesday for the reception of her friends, who passed through a great hall filled with servants in showy liveries. The reception-room was 'wainscoted with oak, the panels all carved, and the doors and chimney finished with a very fine high carving, the ceiling stucco, the window-curtains and chairs yellow Genoa damask, portraits and landscapes very well done round the room, marble tables

between the windows, and looking-glasses with gilt frames, besides virtu and busts that his lordship brought from Italy, the floor being covered with the finest Persian carpet that ever was seen.'

The bishop did not love the things of earth less than his buxom spouse, and 'kept a very handsome table, six dishes of meat being constantly at dinner, and six plates at supper.' The clergy, indeed, took no ordinary share in entertaining the town, an excellent example being set them by the primate, whose choice dinners and cosy suppers were luxuries long to be remembered. This right reverend and easy-going man's vocation for the Church had been decided, not so much by Divine inspiration as by a game of dice. The story is told in one of Dean Swift's letters, given in Nichol's 'Literary Illustrations.' When the Duke of Dorset, who had been Lord-Lieutenant about sixteen years previous to his appointment to that office in 1751, was quitting Ireland, he had but two preferments to bestow, a cornetcy and a Church living, value two hundred a year. For the former two of the duke's friends, Lushington and Stone, anxiously contended, and, not being able to settle the matter amicably between them, it was agreed that dice should decide which would become a pastor of souls, and which a gay and gallant soldier. Lushington won the game, and entered the army, whilst Stone went into the Church. Being a very ingenious man, he quickly rose in his profession to be Bishop of Derry, and subsequently Archbishop of Armagh and Primate. Once when this worthy man was about to give a dinner, in honour of the birthday of his friend and patron, the Duke of Dorset, he ordered a Perigord pie for the occasion, with directions to have this delicacy directed to a merchant of his acquaintance. The pie arrived in

the absence of the merchant, whose wife, supposing it to be a present from one of her husband's friends abroad, sent out and invited some of her neighbours to sup with her at an early date. But on the very day when these good people were to regale themselves, the primate's *maître d'hôtel*, who had hitherto inquired in vain for the lost pie, hearing of the good lady's hospitable intentions, swooped down on her, and carried it away.

'I own,' writes Mrs. Delany, who tells the story, 'I am sorry they did not eat it; such expensive rarities do not become the table of a prelate, who ought not to ape the fantastical luxuriances of fashionable tables.' This charming correspondent likewise speaks of the dinners of the Bishop of Elphin, whose daughter 'was brought up like a princess.' The bishop 'lives well,' she writes, 'but high living is too much the fashion here. You are not invited to dinner to any private gentleman of a thousand a year or less, that does not give you seven dishes at one course, and Burgundy and Champagne; and these dinners they give once or twice a week.'

A taste for painting and music likewise obtained, and was highly encouraged; for the former by the exhibitions at the Royal Academy in Shaw's Court, Dame Street; for the latter by the performance of oratorios constantly sung at St. Patrick's cathedral, and concerts, which were always attended by vast crowds. An excellent entertainment was given every Wednesday during the season by a musical society, the members of which were all men of quality, some of whom played prodigiously well, notably Mr. Brownlow, M.P., a fine executor on the harpsichord, and Captain Reade, who performed on the German flute to great perfection. At the Philharmonic Room in Fishamble Street, concerts were

almost nightly given, the place 'being illuminated with wax and the whole conducted in the genteelest manner.' Likewise at the Great Music Room in Crow Street there was a weekly concert given, 'the instrumental parts by Messrs. Marella, Lee, Storace, De Boeck, and others; the vocal by Mr. Sullivan. To begin exactly at seven o'clock and continue until nine each night, after which there will be a ridotto, with tea, coffee, chocolate, jellies, cards, and all sorts of liquids of the best kind at the usual prices, and suppers by giving notice the day before.'

By way of adding to the diversion of the town, subscription balls were got up by the beaux, headed by Lord Belfreld, and were occasionally held in one of the theatres, converted for the time being into a ball-room. One of these, which was given whilst the Woffington was in Dublin, cost seven hundred pounds. The theatre in which it took place was dressed to represent a wood, space being left in the middle for thirty couple to dance. At one end was a portico of Doric pillars, lighted by green wax candles, arranged in baskets of flowers; then there was a Gothic temple in which refreshments were served, and a jasmine bower where lovers whispered, and a grotto with rustic arches, where the musicians, dressed as shepherds and shepherdesses, discoursed sweet sounds. The trees which lined the walls were the veritable growth of nature, adorned by art in the shape of cotton leaves. The Duke and Duchess of Dorset were present, as were all the members of the polite world which the city numbered; and enjoyed themselves vastly, dancing being kept up long after daylight did appear. One of the most inveterate dancers of the night was a certain Captain Folliat, 'a man of six feet odd inches high, black, awkward,

roaring, ramping.' His gaunt figure was seen continually in every dance. 'I thought,' says a partner of his whom he most affected on this occasion, 'he would have shook my arms off, and crushed my toes to atoms; every moment he did some blundering thing, and as often asked "my ladyship's pardon." I was pitied by the whole company; at last I resolved to dispatch him with dancing, since he was not worth my conquest any other way; I called a council about it, having some scruples of conscience, and fearing he might appear and haunt me after his death staggered my resolutions—but when it was made plain to me that I should do the world a great piece of service by dispatching him, it solved all my scruples, and I had no more qualms about it. In the midst of his furious dancing, when he was throwing his arms about him most outrageously (just like a card scaramouch on a stick), snap went something, that we all thought had been the main bone of his leg, but it proved only a bone of his toe. Notwithstanding this he fought upon his stumps, and would not spare me one dance.'

Besides these social amusements, there were great reviews held frequently in the park, where the troops, to quote from the *Dublin Journal*, 'went through their different evolutions and firings with the greatest exactness, to the satisfaction of the Duke and the general officers.' These reviews were attended by all the fashionable world, Her Grace of Dorset at its head in a yellow coach and six horses, very fine to see. Then the citizens frequented the public gardens every night, they being open to all; where, says Benjamin Victor, in writing to the Countess of Orrery, 'great regularity and decency is unaccountably preserved, and of course unusual dulness is the consequence. If no valiant

captain will knock down a lady, nor any lady cock her pistol at her perfidious man (both these shocking events happened lately in the public gardens), we must remain in this stupid state of tranquillity.' At Marlborough Green there were bi-weekly entertainments made up of dancing, fiddling, and singing by Miss Rachel Baptist, an African lady who wore a wreath of roses, and clad her sable person in orange silk. So multiform, indeed, were its attractions that the green was usually attended by vast crowds.

So far as cleanliness morally and physically went, Dublin was much in the same condition as the sister capital. An advertisement in *Faulkner's Journal*, October 2nd, 1751, informs the inhabitants of the city 'they are requested by the Lord Mayor to sweep the dirt before their houses, twice every week, into the Channel, for the speedier removal of the same by the scavengers, otherwise they will be fined.' The same journal says, 'Street and house robberies are now become so common in this city that it is dangerous to be out late on evenings; and hats, capuchins, books, etc., are frequently stolen from churches and other places of worship in the time of divine service.' This statement is verified by the oftentimes quaint reports in the daily papers; a few of which will serve to illustrate the general condition of the town. 'Last Thursday,' says *Faulkner's Journal*, October 15th, 1751, 'a young gentleman was attacked by a single highwayman near Harold's Cross, who robbed him of his gold watch, twenty guineas, three crowns, and a shilling. He rode a bay gelding about fourteen hands and a half high, was dressed in a white fustian frock, a scarlet waistcoat, and a silver-laced hat, and appeared by his looks to be about thirty years of age.' Here is another. 'Last

Sunday night a gentleman was attacked in Mary's Lane by two fellows with an intent to rob him; he seized one of them and threw him into a cellar, but the other knocked him down: he soon recovered himself, and boldly attacked them again, upon which they made off, but he still pursued, and took one of them, and called a watchman who was only a short distance from him, but would not come to his assistance; the gentleman was obliged to let the villain go on some ruffians coming up. He lost his watch and buttons, but the next morning found them in some mud where he had been knocked down. The same day a woman, genteelly dressed, was detected for picking the pocket of a gentlewoman in Liffey Street, out of which she had taken fifteen shillings, and, upon searching her, half-a-crown was found in her shoe, and half a pistol in a snuff box—the rest she lost in the hurry. The populace dragged her to the quay, tied a ship's rope round her, and ducked her severely.' A few days later we read that 'some rogues attempted to rob the house of Mr. Preston in Little Butter Lane, but, by the courage of his daughter, were prevented from accomplishing their design, who, on hearing a noise, got out of bed, charged two pistols, opened the parlour window, and fired amongst them, upon which they made off; she then charged again, went up-stairs, and looked out of the window, in order to give them another salute if they thought it proper to have paid a second visit.' A paragraph which throws a somewhat curious light on the punishment of criminals, says, 'The woman whom the watch discharged the other night, and who was principal in stealing a great quantity of plate, is the very notorious pickpocket who goes into public assemblies in fine cloathes, the better to perpetrate her wickedness, and who was some time

ago convicted of picking pockets, and sentenced to be whipt at the cart's tail; but the hangman did not think fit to execute the sentence, so she only walked after the cart in a sort of triumph to College Green, where she was put into a landau, though two poor devils were almost whipt to death the same week, not having stolen money enough to bribe the hangman or some other officer.'

It was not only money and goods, however, which were stolen in those days, but human beings. 'Last week,' says the *Dublin Journal*, August, 1751, 'a man near Aungier Street desired two little girls to go along with him on pretence of seeing his wife whom they knew, and to bring their caps with them, which they did; but their mothers getting intelligence which way they had gone, pursued and luckily came up with them on George's Quay, and brought them back. 'Tis imagined the villain intended to put them on board a kid-ship, to send them to the plantations in America.' A month later a 'fellow was taken up in Back Lane for running away with a child from a woman, and as it has not since been heard of he was committed on suspicion of kidnapping or murdering of it.' A little while later we read in the same paper that, 'since the late strict and severe inquiry after the kidnappers, these miscreants have ceased to perpetrate their villainy, at least, in so public a manner as heretofore; but we are told that amongst these robbers there is a prime young villain, who sometimes in the dress of a beau, and at other times like a merchant, tells the wretches he deludes that he went a few years ago from Dublin to America, a poor boy, to try his fortune, and that a lady of that country soon fell in love with him, that he married her and has now many negro slaves under him, and

that all the women who transport themselves, especially from Ireland, immediately get rich husbands. Besides this fine-dressed rogue, there are several in the habit of sailors, who pick up poor tradesmen in the street, pretending to know them; then ply them with spirituous liquors, and abundance of lies about the pleasures they are to enjoy in the plantations abroad, by which means they delude those unhappy victims into a miserable and dangerous voyage, where they lie during the whole time promiscuously in the hold of the ship, in filth and nastiness, insulted perpetually by brutish sailors, and generally die miserably in their tedious passage.'

The streets were badly lit, ill-paved, 'out of repair, and in several places raised to such a height that carriages or horses cannot with safety pass over the same,' whilst the entrances to underground cellars, extending far into the side walk, without rail or other protection, were frequently the cause of severe accidents, and occasional deaths to those who passed that way, as we learn from the papers. Speaking of these mishaps, *Faulkner's Journal* says, 'As lives are sometimes lost, and many legs, arms, skulls, and bones of common people broken by cellars projecting too far into the streets, it is most humbly requested by many who wish well to the publick, and are not carried in coaches or chairs, that some of our nobility, gentry, magistrates, grand and *petit* jurors, would be pleased to break a few of their limbs, or knock out their eyes, or brains, and then perhaps laws might be made, or those already in being put into execution against the encroachments of cellars into the streets.' Here is another strange paragraph from the same journal which speaks volumes for the condition of the town. 'Upon account of the

many sturdy and strolling beggars, impostors, and idle vagrants throughout the kingdom, the nobility, gentry, and clergy are determined to have all the faces of the men shaven clean; to examine their tied-up legs and arms, to force the tongues of those who pretend to be dumb in order to make them speak, and to detect those vile impostors who pretend to have been sailors, to have been slaves in Morocco and Turkey, and to have their tongues cut out; which good resolutions, if put into practice in city and country, will be a means of ridding this nation of the vilest miscreants and vermin that infest this earth, and are the plague and pest of all human society; having every vice in them without one virtue, as they will not work, but live on the blood, vitals, and labour of the industrious poor, who when reduced by sickness or want of work, are ashamed to beg.' Another paragraph declares, 'The Lord Mayor hath given orders that no coach, cart, chariot, chaise, chair, etc., shall stand without horses after sunset, before any coachmaker's or wheelwright's house whatever; which will be of great service to the public, as villains and idle vagabonds often lie in them, and frequently surprise people on dark nights; and sometimes coaches and chairs run against them, to the great danger of lives and limbs.'

To all classes of the Dublin citizens the theatre was the favourite source of amusement. So fond was the polite world of plays, that private theatricals were much in vogue in the houses of the nobility. Frequently, too, at the Castle the officers and gentlemen of the vice-regal household gave amateur performances; whilst once, at least, a play, 'The Distressed Mother,' was acted in the great council-chamber of the Parliament House itself. The *dramatis personæ* were of the first

rank and fashion. My Lord Molesworth's fair daughter played Hermione; Miss Parker, Andromache; my Lord Mountjoy, Pyrrhus; and my Lord Kingsland's brother Orestes. All the bishops, judges, and privy-councillors attended, besides the whole fashionable part of the town.

Amongst the ladies of quality most attracted by the theatre and all concerning it was the Hon. Mrs. Butler, a bright, busy, vivacious woman, whose husband, Colonel Butler, my Lord Lanesborough's brother, 'a plain, rough, merry officer, doated on her, and admired everybody that liked her.' Mrs. Butler was a frequent attendant at the playhouse, and, when George Anne Bellamy had been in Dublin six years previous to the Woffington's second visit, this daughter of an Irish peer had been introduced by Miss O'Hara, Lord Tyrawley's sister, to Mrs. Butler, who at once took the actress under her social wing, patronized her on the stage, and lionized her in her drawing-room. Garrick was at this period, 1745, immediately after his parting with Peg Woffington, performing for the second time before a Dublin audience, in company with Sheridan, they having agreed to play Shakespearian characters with him alternately. The Bellamy was likewise in the company. As Quin had, on her first appearance in Covent Garden, objected to the lady's playing Monimia in the same piece with him, so Garrick, who had but a poor opinion of her talents, protested against her playing Constance to his 'King John.' Moreover, he desired that Miss Orpheur, a 'hard-favoured' actress, would take the part.

Now George Anne had set her heart on being seen as Constance, and had secured some very fine gowns wherewith to dress the character; she therefore re-

sented Garrick's objection, and almost involved him and Sheridan in a quarrel on the subject, Sheridan having taken her side. It was, however, finally settled that the 'hard-favoured' actress was to play the part; whereon Miss Bellamy, who was a lady of spirit, or, in other words, a little vixen, determined to have her revenge. She therefore fled to her patroness, Mrs. Butler, and laid full her bitter complaint before that sympathetic lady, who having no objection to give proof of the power she exercised in the genteel world, at once promised to espouse her *protégée's* cause. Therefore setting aside her partiality for Garrick, she resolved to punish him for thwarting Miss Bellamy in her lawful desires. To this end she sent round polite messages to all her friends, requesting them, as a favour to her, not to attend the theatre on the night when 'King John' was played. As she was a social power, and gave prodigiously fine balls, to which admission was always eagerly sought, her request was readily complied with, so that on the night when the tragedy was played the boxes were tenantless and the pit empty, to the consternation of David Garrick, and the wonder of the world. This was the first humiliation in connection with his profession which the great actor ever received. But it was not the only triumph which the young lady of spirit secured this season; for presently Sheridan played King John, and she Constance, when the theatre was so crowded that vast numbers could not be accommodated with admission. Nor was this all. She was of opinion that Garrick had not yet received sufficient mortification, and so the young actress eagerly awaited an opportunity of inflicting more. Accordingly, when Garrick's benefit came round, he selected to play in 'Jane Shore,' and, knowing from ex[illegible]e the

social influence which the Bellamy commanded, and being ever a wise man where money was concerned, he requested her to play the part of the unhappy heroine. This she refused; as she was unfitted to perform the character of Constance, she, in her womanly spirit, told him she was likewise unsuited to take that of Jane Shore.

But Garrick, unwilling to let his interest suffer, besought Mrs. Butler to use her influence with her *protégée* on his behalf; in the mean time he strove to make his peace with the young lady, and ingratiate himself in her favour. For this purpose he resorted to flattery, an artifice which in the world's history has so often served to overcome a woman's heart. He therefore wrote to her that, if she would oblige him by playing, he would write her 'a goody, goody epilogue,' which, with the help of her eyes, 'would do more mischief than ever the flesh or the devil had done since the world began.' This missive, which contained many similar compliments, was addressed 'To my soul's Idol, the Beautiful Ophelia,' and given into the hands of his servant to carry to Miss Bellamy. The man, being busy, called a porter, and, without looking at the address, bade him deliver the letter. The porter, believing some joke was intended, carried it to a newspaper office, the result of which was that it appeared in print next day. When the story got abroad, the whole town made merry of Garrick's love-letter. The idol of Mr. Garrick's soul was, however, reconciled to him; no doubt the reference to her eyes, which were beautiful and blue, had the desired effect of softening her heart.

Garrick, whilst in Dublin this season, constantly visited at Mrs. Butler's home in Stephen's Green. The

lady was fond of theatrical lions, but, moreover, she liked Davy for himself. Garrick returned the compliment in kind, but she probably had reason to suspect that the complexion of his love was not of the same platonic type as hers, and, having some Hibernian humour, she deigned to play him a trick. When he was about to take his leave previous to his return to London, she told him with faltering words she had a sealed package for him, which contained that which was more valuable than life. 'In it,' said she, 'you will read my sentiments; but I strictly enjoin you not to open it until you have passed the Hill of Howth.' Garrick, having little doubt that this package contained a declaration of her sentiments for him, which prudence forbade her to make known whilst he remained in the same country with her, received it from her hands with a significant glance, and an air of regret that was touching. Next day, when the vessel which bore him across the Channel had reached the specified point he eagerly broke the seals, and tore the cover from the packet, which contained—not the declarations of a broken heart, but a copy of Wesley's hymns and Dean Swift's 'Discourses'; when so great was his chagrin and disappointment, that he flung both the Dean and Wesley right into the sea.

CHAPTER X.

Peg Woffington in Dublin—A Command Night—Going to the Play—A brilliant Audience—Some Irish Celebrities of the Period—'The only Theme in or out of the Theatre'—Mrs. Gunning and her Family—Miss Bellamy's Account of Them—Peg Woffington and the Gunnings—The Beauties go to London—Wooed and Wedded.

THIS autumn season of 1751, when the Woffington was engaged to play at Smock Alley theatre, was one of exceptional brilliancy. Parliament was opened in October with great ceremony by the new Lord-Lieutenant, as respresenting His most Gracious Majesty King George; the coach in which he rode to College Green being most superb, and seeming all glass and gold. Moreover, it was drawn by six horses, magnificently caparisoned; and by the traces stood six tiny pages, attired in the splendour of crimson-velvet and gold lace, with feathered hats upon their curled heads, and swords by their little thighs. Then, on either side of this great glass coach, walked the gentlemen of the ducal retinue, in full dress, with their hats under their arms; the whole presenting a prodigiously fine show. A vast number of persons of distinction flocked from England in the wake of the viceroy; and most of the Irish county families settled in the capital for the winter.*

* To country ladies with pretensions to gentility or fashion, it was a certain necessity that they should spend at least part of the season in Dublin, and enjoy the festivities of the Castle; the mere descriptions of which, doled out to their less fortunate neighbours, would form the subject of conversation for the remainder of the year.

Concerning this desire of the provincial ladies to winter in town, *Faulkner's Journal* of October, 1751, publishes the following quaint paragraph:

'Some time ago we received a letter signed Sarah Lovecity, complaining for herself and many other ladies of their fathers and husbands not bringing them to town this winter, on account of

The additional attraction given to the season in the performances of Peg Woffington were eagerly anticipated, and crowded houses at Smock Alley were duly expected by the manager. In the first week of September the *Dublin Journal* stated that 'the workmen who have for some time past been employed in making the galleries of the theatre more spacious and commodious have now finished, and we hear it will be opened on the 16th of this month.' It was not, however, till the 5th of October that 'the celebrated Mrs. Woffington from the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden' was announced to perform the part of Lady Townley in 'The Provoked Husband'; the comedy being likewise supported by Sheridan, Theophilus Cibber, Digges, King, Mrs. Bland, and Miss Davies. The house was of course crowded, and the reception given the Woffington hearty, but it was not until a fortnight later, when, by command of the Duke and Duchess of Dorset, she repeated her performance of Lady Townley, that the theatrical season may be said to have commenced.

A command night by the Lord-Lieutenant was always regarded as an occasion of special grace. His presence, as well as that of his court and of the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, whose courteous custom it was to likewise attend on such nights, gave an air of state and ceremony little less than royal to the performance. Moreover, a vast crowd of the fashionable world was sure to attend the playhouse on such occasions, and lend it

the exorbitant price of hay and oats. Now we—agreeable to the ladies' commands, and our ardent desire of being blessed with their presence, being well assured that there can be neither splendour nor magnificence but where they are—have made strict inquiries, and have found hay from ten to eleven shillings per load, and oats from eight to nine shillings per barrel, and the markets falling.'

all the charm and brilliancy of a court drawing-room. Accordingly, about five o'clock on this October evening, when their Graces for the first time during the season visited the theatre, Smock Alley and the ways that led thereto became the scenes of strange and wonderful confusion. Already the great, lumbering, showily-painted coaches and sedan chairs had commenced to invade the somewhat narrow thoroughfares, intent on depositing their burdens of the first rank and distinction at the playhouse doors, where sentries in full uniform were drawn up on guard.

All was bustle, movement, and confusion; the noise of innumerable voices was deafening. Here were coachmen, red-faced and powder-wigged, thundering sturdy oaths at their steeds; footmen shouting and running to and fro; silver and gold-laced lacqueys, with staffs surmounted by the coronets of their noble masters, striving to keep at bay the good-humoured crowd pushing forward to peep through the windows of the coaches; and plush liveried chair-men cursing with Hibernian heartiness their sturdier fellows who had outstripped them in the race for place. Horses pranced, the city gamin screamed to each other, saluted such of the gentlefolk as were known to them, or who were rendered conspicuous by their dress; a crowd of orange-women cried their wares; the motley throngs gathered round the pit and gallery doors, shouted witticisms and pleasant badinage, as they crushed each other almost to death; and the link boys, who had already lighted their flambeaux, darted here and there, leaving flaming tracks, brief and lurid, in their fitful wakes.

Never was there such a to-do; and in the midst of it all a cry was heard from the street boys, hearty and full of cheer, as if in welcome to some old friend or well-

approved favourite; and then, followed by a right merry though half-ragged crowd, came the Woffington's coach and pair, with servants in fine liveries as grand as any lady of quality that came to see her. Turning to the throng with a smile that fell on and brightened them like a burst of sunshine, she descended from her coach with the air of a duchess, 'an' yet with as friendly a face as if she only left us yesterday,' says one of the orange-women, who stares at her as she enters the sacred portal of the stage door. 'An' it's herself has the charitable heart,' says another, 'an' is the good daughter; sure her mother has nothin' in the world to do for the remainder of her days but say her prayers; an' it's the handsome velvet cloak and gold snuff-box she sports.' 'Ay, an' if it goes to that,' replied the first gossip, 'she wears a diamond ring, too; sure she showed it to me herself a month ago, an' they're all the gifts of Peggy.'

Most of the people of quality have arrived by this time, and there is a lull in the street, until the tramp of cavalry is heard, and a cry of 'The duke! the duke!' is carried down the street long before the first red-coat of his escort turns the corner. As the cavalry approaches, the crowd flies to right and left; then the ducal coach is drawn up, the guard which lines the way, carpeted with scarlet cloth from the coach to the play-house door, presents arms, and the duke and duchess are met by Sheridan and Cibber, who stand bare-headed and with candles in their hands, ready to receive their Graces, and conduct them to their boxes, canopied with scarlet silk, and emblazoned with the royal arms. As they enter the orchestra strikes up the national anthem, and the house receives them with uncon[illegible]on testimonies of joy. When they have bowed their thanks in a most gracious manner, up goes the curtain, and t[illegible]anager

comes forward and speaks a senseless prologue, to the effect that, when George committed the reins to Dorset's hands, the effect which immediately followed was as day superseding the tedious night; the said Dorset was ever dear to the Muses nine, and his mere presence was sufficient to 'new warm the poet's lay, new rouse the actor's fire,' and do a vast number of other extraordinary things.

The playhouse had never presented a more brilliant appearance. In the centre of the horseshoe-shaped arena, illuminated with wax in honour of their Graces, sat my Lord Mayor, wearing his scarlet cloak and chain of office, and beside him his lady, plump, as became the spouse of such a dignitary, and attired in green satin, as behoved her patriotic spirit. And in the boxes all round what an array of beauty and fashion, what a glitter of diamonds and precious stones, what a sheen of satins and silks, what a waving of feathered head-dresses and perfumed fans, what a gleaming of white shoulders and bosoms rising from billows of lace! Near their Graces' box sat my Lady Gormanstown, a rare beauty, with dark blue eyes, and hair that looked black as the raven's wing by night; and with her my lord, who invariably dressed in a full suit of light blue. Close beside them was Lord Trimlestown, in scarlet clothes, gold frogged, and a full powdered wig; and where the soft light fell full on her box sat Viscountess Grandison, a lily-fair beauty with eyes of tenderest blue, and smooth hair the colour of dead gold. Of course the Hon. Mrs. Butler was there, and in her box sat Miss Betty Forth, whose finery was almost flung into the gutter at the playhouse door through the overturning of her sedan chair by its inebriated carriers. Likewise there was present Viscount Taaffe, whose son had years

ago taken away this approved good actress whom they had all assembled to see; and old Lord Kerry, who dressed in crimson satin with gold frogs; and Viscount Molesworth, whose favourite attire was purple satin and silver frogs; and Sir John Meade, in black velvet with white facings. And opposite their Graces' box was the sport-loving Lord Howth, who dressed after the manner of a groom, and wore a coachman's wig, with rows of many curls; and the eccentric Captain Debrisay, who accoutred in the style of a *habitué* of Charles the Second's court.

The pit, too, had its celebrities, and could boast of little Dr. Padmore of Britain Street, wearing black velvet and scarlet stockings; and Counsellor Costello, a prime favourite with the populace, and a great lover of good plays; and George Faulkner, the proprietor of the *Dublin Journal*, a round-stomached little man in brown clothes, who was a fine judge of the stage likewise. Presently, when the Woffington appeared, the brilliant crowd greeted her with uncommon applause, the pit lustily clapping its hands, the boxes waving their fans, the galleries cheering. And as she bowed her thanks, her beautifully rounded cheeks flushed crimson with pleasure, her liquid eyes sparkled with excitement, her perfect lips parted in a smile that lent a wonderful charm to her countenance. 'Her beauty,' admits the Bellamy, who set herself up as her rival, 'beggared all description.' But besides the loveliness of her face there was a grace in her bearing, a piquancy in her manner of speech, that completed the spell she exercised, and exalted it to fascination.

Press criticisms on performances were rare in those days, when critics were self-elected, and held sway in coffee-houses and taverns. It is therefore worth noting

what George Faulkner printed in the next issue of his paper regarding this actress. Here it is: 'The celebrated Mrs. Woffington's performance in Smock Alley theatre continues to draw the most crowded audiences hitherto known. Her elegant deportment at her first entrance is a prologue in her behalf. Her correct pronunciation is accompanied by the most just and graceful action. Her unaffected ease and vivacity in comedy, her majestic pathos in tragedy, shows her to be an exact imitation of nature, without the least appearance of her handmaid, art, though, at the same time, possessed and executed by that lady in the highest degree.

'These eminent qualities have so universally obtained for her the esteem and applause of all the tasteful and judicious in this city, that it may be said of her, in imitation of Cæsar's phrase, "She came, was seen, and she triumphed."'

Then follows a long eulogy in rhyme on her genius, which ends—

> 'Hail, then, in whom united we behold
> Whatever graced the theatres of old.
> A form above description; and a mind
> By judgment tempered, and by wit refined.
> Cut off in beauty's prime, when Oldfield died,
> The Muses wept, and threw their harps aside;
> But now assumed the lyre, amazed to see
> Her greatest beauties far outdone by thee.'

Concerning these lines, Mr. Benjamin Victor, the treasurer of Smock Alley theatre, found he had something to say; and accordingly he unburdened his mind in a quaintly penned letter, addressed, 'To Mrs. Woffington in Dublin.' 'Madam,' said he, 'you have long been the subject of true praise, and have received many public instances of it from the admiring world; but the scribbling fools here offer it up so fulsome, that instead

of incense, I dare say it as as offensive to you as the snuff of a candle—now, madam, if my praise proves the snuff of a wax-candle, it will at least not offend, and I shall have reason to be satisfied.' (This simile is rather obscure, but the manager goes on triumphantly.) 'The silly poet in *Faulkner's Journal*, on Saturday last, made me laugh: he made you the successor to the poor, antiquated Mrs. Vanderbank (who often declared that in her youth she was the glory of the Irish stage), and concludes it one of your least excellencies to far outdo Mrs. Oldfield.

'I was one of the audience when *Lady Townley* made her first appearance in London; and since the death of that celebrated actress, Mrs. Oldfield, I have not seen a complete Lady Townley till last Monday night. You know, she was called *inimitable* in that character, by the author, Cibber, that great master of comedy; but, I dare say, even he will admit that epithet falsified by your performance.

'After your first appearance in tragedy in London, I had the favour of two letters from him; in the first he employed a whole sheet in your praise in *Andromache*. I had so great a prepossession of your good understanding, and his judgment, that I could easily give him credit, though I had known him long an admirer of your person.

'On Wednesday night last I was convinced that you are a most provoking creature (to use the Laureat's phrase). You are not content with destroying all our females, but make even our heroes shrink before you. I take this opportunity of congratulation, and beg to remain, madam, your most humble servant.'

Night after night she played to densely-crowded houses, appearing alternately as Andromache and

Hermione in 'The Distressed Mother'; Sylvia in 'The Recruiting Officer'; Calista in 'The Fair Penitent'; and Sir Harry Wildair in 'The Constant Couple'; and never failed to meet with the most enthusiastic applause. Hitchcock, in his 'View of the Irish Stage,' says, speaking of the Woffington, 'Her reception was such as surprised the most sanguine expectations of her friends, and astonished even the manager, who was highly pleased with his acquisition. It is almost impossible to describe the raptures the audience were in at beholding so beautiful, elegant, and accomplished a woman, or the happy consequences which resulted to Mr. Sheridan.' On this latter point Victor adds his testimony. 'By four of her characters,' he writes, 'performed ten nights each that season, there were taken about four thousand pounds; an instance never known in any theatre from four old stock plays; and two of them in which the manager acted no part.'

Presently Colley Cibber's comedy of 'The Nonjuror,' not acted in Dublin for eight years, was rehearsed and duly played, in order to give the Woffington an opportunity of appearing as Maria in this comedy; she was likewise to dance a minuet, and all the *dramatis personæ* were to figure in a country-dance. Great were the audiences that assembled to witness the play, and so numerous were the poems and criticisms eulogizing her which were showered upon *Faulkner's Journal*, that the editor was obliged to apologize for their non-appearance, and offer his would-be contributors the hackneyed excuse of want of space.

Sheridan was now anxious to revive some Shakespearian plays, and sounded the public on the matter by the following advertisement: 'The manager of the Theatre Royal proposes to perform the six following

plays of Shakespeare as soon as the boxes are engaged, viz. "Richard," "Hamlet," "Macbeth," "King John," "The Merchant of Venice," and "As You Like It." The plays will be performed in order, according to the number of places taken for each. The house will be illuminated with wax lights. Places to be taken of Mr. Neil, box-keeper.'

To see Peg Woffington and Sheridan in Shakespearian plays was a treat which the stage-loving people of this good city could not resist, and places were quickly taken, their Graces of Dorset giving command nights for 'The Merchant of Venice,' 'Hamlet,' and 'As You Like It.' The Woffington had been praised before, but she was now lauded exceedingly. Panegyrics on her person, her elegant deportment, her graceful acting, appeared almost daily in the press, as likewise verses comparing her to the most charming of the Muses, the most beautiful of the goddesses. She was the pride and glory of the stage, she pleased the giddy age, she read aright the author's page, and did many other excellent things. To Sheridan, another poetaster admitted much was due; 'for,' said he, quaintly enough, 'we owe our Woffington to you.' Their mutual talents, this young gentleman was of opinion, 'shall adorn the scene, and add new lustre to a Dorset's reign.' But people more sensible than poets spoke well of the Woffington's talents; and amongst them was a correspondent and admirer of the Countess of Orrery, who says, 'The brilliant Mrs. Woffington is the only theme either in or out of the theatre. Her performances are in general admirable. In *Andromache* her grief was dignified and her deportment elegant; in Hermione she discovered such talents as have not been displayed since the celebrated Mrs. Porter, whom I dare say Lord

Orrery remembers—such commanding force, such variety such graceful attitudes; the very fools stared and felt her powers. In short, poor Bland is inevitably undone, for those fools (her greatest admirers), who had not sense enough to see her defects before, now see them by the comparison. I heartily wish I had force enough to excite a desire in your ladyship to come to Dublin to see this actress.'

On the 9th of March, 1752, she took her benefit, on which occasion she again played Lady Townley. Their Graces of Dorset were present, and so great was the demand for tickets that it was announced 'the pit will be laid open to the boxes for the convenience of the ladies.' This memorable theatrical season ended in May.

It was during this visit to Ireland that Peg Woffington made the acquaintance of two young ladies of quality, who soon afterwards became famous throughout Europe for their rare loveliness, and were invariably spoken of as 'the beautiful Gunnings.' Their father, John Gunning, a thriftless Irish gentleman, is described as hailing from 'Castle Coote in Ireland;' but inasmuch as he was wholly penniless, it is safe to argue that his castle was a mere ruin—more picturesque than tenantable, as castles, alas! in Ireland are wont to be. He had married Bridget Bourke, a daughter of the sixth Viscount Mayo, who became the mother of children remarkable for beauty from their infancy. The parents of these budding graces seem to have lived in a state of chronic poverty; to which George Anne Bellamy bears witness in those interesting, if somewhat scandalous memoirs written for her by Alexander Bicknell, in an amusingly inflated and most verbose style. During her stay in Dublin in 1754, she tells us that one day, as she was passing through Britain Street on her way from

rehearsal, she heard some cries of distress, when, yielding to what she calls the impulses of humanity, but which might probably be better described as the temptations of curiosity, she 'over-leaped the bounds of good breeding,' and stepped into the house. Led by an irresistible attraction, this gushing young lady entered without ceremony into the parlour, the doors of which, it may be significantly noted, 'appeared to be guarded by persons not at all suited to those within.' Here she found a gentlewoman of a most elegant figure, surrounded by her children, one of whom was 'a sweet boy.'

George Anne courtesied, apologized for her abrupt intrusion, and informed the lady with the elegant figure, otherwise Mrs. Gunning, that the lamentations of the family had reached her ears, on which she had taken the liberty of inquiring if she could be of any assistance. It was now Mrs. Gunning's turn to make a polite speech. She complimented her visitor upon possessing 'such humane sensations,' and informed her that, being in debt, her husband had found it necessary to seek a seclusion unknown to bumbailiffs. Mrs Gunning added that she had been in hopes her brother, Lord Mayo, 'listening to the dictates of fraternal affection, would not suffer a sister and her family to be reduced to distress,' but that his lordship remained in a condition common to peers and others with numerous and needy relatives, elegantly described as 'inflexible to repeated solicitations.' At this stage of the conversation some ill-looking men, already referred to as bumbailiffs, entered the apartment, whereon Mrs. Gunning and the sympathetic George Anne retired to consult what was best to be done in so disagreeable a predicament. In a little while the actress departed; but when night came, with her sable shadows, a dark figure might have been

observed hovering in the vicinity of Mrs. Gunning's house. This was none other than Miss Bellamy's man-servant, seeing whom, Mrs. Gunning noiselessly raised her drawing-room windows and flung out such of her household goods as she could manage to convey to him, which he carried to the actress's lodgings. Here two of the budding graces—Maria, who was 'all life and spirits,' and Miss Betty, who was 'more reserved and solid'—were subsequently brought.

Now it happened that, when Peg Woffington came to Dublin, she took up her residence in Capel Street, at a house opposite that occupied by the Gunning family. The graces had by this time budded, and had now reached the respective ages of seventeen and eighteen years. Seeing the Woffington daily walk in silk attire, or drive in her elegant coach, witnessing, likewise, the attention she commanded, and hearing the praises lavished on her, these young girls, dowered with a divine gift of surpassing loveliness, resolved that they too would become actresses. Then there rose before them visions in which they saw themselves dressed in purple and fine linen, lauded, *fêted*, and with all the world at their feet. But this resolve was not one which they were allowed to carry out. They were the daughters of a gentleman who had once possessed a castle, and the nieces of a viscount; and though he had remained 'inflexible to repeated solicitations,' yet for his sake they must endure a lowly lot—nay, even starvation itself—rather than take a step which in those days it was considered would entail disgrace on a family even to the third and fourth generations. However, if they dared not try their fortunes on public stages, they might at least adventure in private drawing-rooms. Having come to this conclusion, they clearly

saw their first step towards such an end must be to get presented at the Castle. There was no difficulty in procuring a *chaperone* to undertake the required introduction, but there was an obstacle which at first sight seemed insurmountable. Nature had given them wonderful beauty, but fortune had denied them decent dresses. Now the one seemed worthless without the other, for, though a poet had declared beauty unadorned was adorned most, the world was prosaic, and would prove heartlessly intolerant of any attempt to test the virtue of this assertion savouring of the flesh, no matter how true in spirit. Alack-a-day, what was to be done? Dresses nor money they had none.

At this point in their dilemma, the thought of Peg Woffington flashed on them like an inspiration. They had heard she was willing to help all who asked her; and they knew, from watching her at the windows, that her wardrobe was varied and splendid. Summoning heart of grace, they therefore wrote to her, asking if she would lend them dresses in which they might be presented at court. To this request, the Woffington replied, with ready good nature, that they might come and select from her stock such gowns as pleased them best. And so it happened that Maria and Betty Gunning—afterwards destined to become respectively a countess and a duchess—made their *début* in society in the borrowed robes of an actress. Their success at the viceregal court was great; two angels, it was said, had dropped from the clouds. Their praises were on every tongue. Therefore Mrs. Gunning, who was wise in her generation, determined to carry them further afield, and present them to London society, where men of position and wealth were more numerous, and less given to fortune-hunting than in the Irish capital.

An annuity of £150 which she at this time inherited enabled her to put her project into execution at once. It may be too that it was hastened by an incident which adds an additional colour of romance to the remarkable career of the beauties. So elated were they by their triumph at the viceregal court, and at the prospects so newly opened up before them, that they became anxious to know their fate; and accordingly, with national credulity, sought out a mysterious hag who, by virtue of her supposed close social relationship to the devil, enjoyed a reputation for revealing the future to those who consulted her. To the Gunnings, her promises of high rank and brilliant fortune were liberal, but to one of them she likewise predicted a premature death.

So Mrs. Gunning and her daughters fair set out for London town; and in due course were introduced to the Court of George II., who kissed them with a heartiness unusual to the stereotyped osculation customary at royal presentations. So great was the sensation they made that the town could talk of nothing else save their extraordinary beauty. 'The two Miss Gunnings,' writes Walpole, 'are twenty times more the subject of conversation than the two brothers Newcastle and Pelham, and Lord Granville. These are two Irish girls, of no fortune, who are declared the handsomest women alive. I think their being two, so handsome, and both such perfect figures, is their chief excellence; for, singly, I have seen much handsomer women than either; however, they can't walk in the Park, or go to Vauxhall, but such mobs follow them that they are generally driven away.'

So anxious were the people to catch a glimpse of them that, when it was known they were going to

the theatre, vast numbers assembled at the playhouse doors, and waited there hours before their arrival; and on one occasion, whilst taking the air on the Mall, the mob was so great that they were obliged to seek the protection of a file of the Guards. In another letter, Walpole tells a story of the beauties, 'who made more noise than any of their predecessors since the days of Helen.' They went down to see Hampton Court; and, as they were going into the Beauty Room, another company arrived. 'The housekeeper said, "This way, ladies; here are the Beauties." The Gunnings flew into a passion, and asked her what she meant; they came to see the palace, and not to be showed as a sight themselves.' Every day it seemed as if their reputation increased. A bootmaker, by the exhibition of a shoe belonging to Miss Betty at a penny a head, realized the sum of two guineas and a half in one day; wits made epigrams in praise of them; beaux paid them courtly homage; their names were coupled with a thousand toasts. The objects of such admiration were wise enough to estimate their charms at their proper matrimonial worth; and the fine gentlemen who had no titles with which to ennoble them, or wealth with which to endow them, received no encouragement; whilst those so possessed were smiled on with heavenly sweetness. Amongst those favoured in this manner, were James, fourth Duke of Hamilton, and George William, sixth Earl of Coventry, both of whom subsequently became the respective husbands of the beauties. The story of their wooings and of one of their weddings is inimitably told by the prince of letter-writers. 'The event that has made most noise since my last,' writes Horace Walpole to Horace Mann in February, 1752, 'is the extempore wedding of the

youngest of the two Gunnings, who have made so vehement a noise. Lord Coventry, a grave young lord, of the remains of the patriot breed, has long dangled after the eldest, virtuously with regard to her virtue, not very honourably with regard to his own credit. About six weeks ago Duke Hamilton, the very reverse of the earl, hot, debauched, extravagant, and equally damaged in his fortune and person, fell in love with the youngest at the masquerade, and determined to marry her in the spring. About a fortnight since, at an immense assembly at my Lord Chesterfield's, made to show the house, which is really most magnificent, Duke Hamilton made violent love at one end of the room, while he was playing at pharaoh at the other end; that is, he saw neither the bank nor his own cards, which were of three hundred pounds each; he soon lost a thousand. I own I was so little a professor in love that I thought all this parade looked ill for the poor girl, and could not conceive, if he was so much engaged with his mistress as to disregard such sums, why he played at all. However, two nights afterwards, being left alone with her while her mother and sister were at Bedford House, he found himself so impatient that he sent for a parson. The doctor refused to perform the ceremony without licence or ring; the duke swore he would send for the archbishop. At last they were married with a ring of the bed curtain, at half an hour after twelve at night, at Mayfair Chapel. The Scotch are enraged; the women mad that so much beauty has had its effect; and, what is more silly, my Lord Coventry declares that now he will marry the other.'

The earl was as good as his word, and Maria Gunning was, on the 5th of March, 1752, made Countess of

Coventry. When the duchess was presented at court, a great crowd assembled to see her; 'the noble mob,' says Walpole, 'clambered upon chairs and tables to look at her.' Then he gives us a glimpse, which he says is not unentertaining, of their Graces' domestic life. 'Duke Hamilton,' he tells Horace Mann, 'is the abstract of Scotch pride; he and the duchess at their own house walk in to dinner before their company, sit together at the upper end of their own table, eat off the same plate, and drink to nobody beneath the rank of earl. Would not one wonder how they could get anybody either above or below that rank to dine with them at all?'

The poor, foolish Countess of Coventry was not quite so happy in her married life; her grave young lord was 'jealous, prude, and scrupulous,' and watched over her closely. Among other things which he objected to was her painting her beautiful face red and white, after the fashion of the age. That she bedaubed her cheeks with a liberal hand my Lord Chesterfield testifies; 'for,' says his observing lordship, 'I was near enough to see manifestly that she had laid on a great deal of white, which she does not want, and which would destroy both her natural complexion and her teeth.' It did more than that, it hastened, if not actually caused, her death. It was in vain that my lord protested against the usage, so one day, by way of teaching her a lesson, he, while at Sir John Bland's house, before a company of sixteen persons assembled to dine, coursed her round the table, and forcibly scrubbed off the red with a napkin. The poor countess used to confide her wonder to her friends that her lord could use her so ill, when she knew he had so great a regard that he would die for her, and when he was so good as to marry her without a shilling.

CHAPTER XI.

A Second Dublin Season—The Acme of her Fame—The Beefsteak Club—The Sublime Society of Beefsteaks—Political Disturbances—The Tragedy of 'Mahomet'—Mr. Digges and the Audience—Sheridan's Address to his Company—Riot in the Playhouse—Sheridan's Address—Peg Woffington leaves Ireland.

THE beautiful Gunnings had been *fêted*, wooed, and wedded whilst Peg Woffington was yet in Ireland. At the commencement of the season 1752, Sheridan engaged her at a salary of eight hundred pounds, which was then considered prodigiously large. This began on the night of the 8th of October, when the Woffington played the part of Lady Betty Modish. A week later she appeared in the character of Belvidera in 'Venice Preserved,' by command of the Duke and Duchess of Dorset. Later on, according to the bills, she played in 'Julius Cæsar,' in 'Ulysses,' 'writ by Mr. Rowe,' and in Congreve's delightful comedies. The season, so far as its success was concerned, proved a repetition of the previous winter. In tragedy and comedy, Peg Woffington was pronounced alike inimitable; and crowded houses nightly testified to her vast popularity. 'At this time,' says Hitchcock, 'the theatre was the fashionable resort of all ranks. Crowded every night with the first characters in the kingdom, it was in reality a source of entertainment and instruction. Its exhibitions might grace a Greek or a Roman stage. Propriety, order, and decorum presided over the whole. Its professors were held in the highest esteem, admitted into the first assemblies, and treated with the utmost respect.' In social life, as well as in theatrical, the Woffington's society was sought after, not only for her beauty, but for her humour, her ability, and the sweet-

ness of her natural disposition. 'It was at this era,' says Charles Macklin, 'that Woffington might have been said to have reached the acme of her fame; she was then in the bloom of her person, accomplishments, and profession; highly distinguished for her wit and vivacity; with a charm of conversation that at once attracted the admiration of the men and the envy of the women. Her company off, was equally sought for as on the stage; and though she did not much admire the frivolity of her own sex, and consequently did not mix much with them, she was the delight of some of the gravest and most scientific characters in Church and State.'

For a while all went well, but at the close of the second season, both Sheridan and the Woffington found themselves stranded on a political rock that wrecked their chances of regaining the popular good will. The small beginning from which this great event sprang was the establishment of the Beefsteak Club. Such clubs, Benjamin Victor says, were 'of ancient institution in every theatre, when the principal performers dined one day in the week together, generally Saturday, and authors and other geniuses were admitted members.' A Beefsteak Club had been established in London in the first decade of the eighteenth century, the providore of which was Dick Estcourt, a wonderful mimic, the pleasantest of boon companions, and an actor who 'had the honour (nature endowing him with an easy, free, and unaffected mode of eloquence) in comedy to lætificate his audience, especially the quality.' By virtue of his office as providore, Estcourt wore a small gold gridiron suspended from his neck, of which the merry fellow was mighty proud. The club was composed of the chief wits and great men of the nation, and

amongst those who most frequently gathered round the cheerful board in Estcourt's house in Covent Garden, were Sir Roger de Coverley, facetious Doctor King, and Sir Robert Steele, who loved Estcourt well, and mourned him true.

There was likewise the Sublime Society of Steaks, founded by Rich and Charles Mordaunt, known as the mad Earl of Peterborough, about 1735. Rich, the father of English harlequinades, manager of Covent Garden playhouse, and lover of cats, was in the habit of arranging, in a private room in his theatre, the wonderful tricks he would play as harlequin, the astounding transformations he would reveal by a wave of his magic wand, and the various other comic businesses of his entertainments. To this apartment frequently came the polished courtier and skilled diplomatist, Lord Peterborough, the friend of Pope, the companion of Dean Swift, who humorously described him as—

'A skeleton in outward figure.'

His lordship subsequently privately married the charming singer, Anastasia Robinson, who loved him faithfully. Indeed, the eccentric earl had a charm that won women's hearts; moreover, he was a man of varied talents, and loved to hold converse with wits, poets, and players, by reason of which fancy he spent many a pleasant hour with Rich. It happened one day that he tarried in the manager's room until the clock struck two, when Rich rose up to spread a white cloth on the table, for he was a regular man, and ate his dinner betimes, as became a harlequin. Presently he proceeded to cook his beefsteak, begging that his lordship might stay and share his meal. Nothing loth, Peterborough at once assented, when another steak was

clapped on the gridiron, and a second bottle of good port sent for to 'The Rose and Crown Tavern' close by, when the peer and the player sat down and enjoyed themselves heartily. So delighted indeed was the earl that he proposed they should dine in the same place and manner on the following Saturday, and begged that he might be allowed to bring with him some men of parts. To this Rich readily enough assented, and in this manner was founded the Sublime Society of Beefsteaks, which held its own down to the middle of the present century, changing its quarters more than once, and ending its merry days in the Lyceum theatre.

The Beefsteak club which Sheridan founded was modelled on somewhat different lines. It was opened by a dinner given in the great room of the theatre, the guests invited numbering about fifty, who were either peers, members of parliament, or men of the first distinction. Thirty of these accepted the invitation, enrolled themselves members of the club, and elected the charming Woffington as their president. She and Sheridan were the only players who were admitted, and Peg Woffington had the further distinction of being the only female member. What added to the singularity of the club was that its founder defrayed all costs in connection with it. 'The reader will readily believe,' says Benjamin Victor, 'that a club where there were good accommodations, such a lovely president full of wit and spirit, and nothing to pay, must soon grow remarkably fashionable.' Fashionable it certainly became; witty peers, Castle courtiers, and men of fashion flocked round the manager's hospitable board once a week, when never was there such a flow of humour, such mirth, such conviviality. 'Yet,' says Macklin, 'though wit and spirit here took their most excursive

flights, they never once broke through the laws of decorum.'

Now it happened at this very time that politics, never long absent from the surface of Irish life, ran particularly high. 'Our city of Dublin,' writes Victor to Mrs. Knight in London, 'in the parliamentary winters used to be the assembly of all the people of figure and fortune in the kingdom, who have had nothing to do here these thirty years past but the government business and pursuing their pleasures; but this winter a very strange thing called *patriotism* has appeared, and as violent an opposition in the House of Commons as ever was known in England to the measures of the government, which has drove the whole people into the most outrageous spirit of party ever known in the kingdom. The consequence will, I fear, be fatal to many of these patriots, for the king will no doubt support his viceroy, and all within the power of government have lost their places and pensions—a loss I dare say they will have leisure to be sorry for. This you will suppose has been very detrimental to all public diversions, and the theatre has greatly suffered by these commotions.'

The Duke of Dorset, who had commenced his reign with great popularity, had speedily fallen into disfavour with the people; not from any personal faults, but rather from the political policy he represented. Discord and discontent rapidly spread through the nation, and in the capital, party spirit was rampant. The Beefsteak club, numbering among its members Lord George Sackville, the Duke of Dorset's son, and being principally composed of courtiers and the supporters of government measures, public indignation was raised against it, and was inflamed by the knowledge that the

toasts drunk at the manager's hospitable board were not of the most patriotic complexion. The club was not in reality used for any party purpose whatsoever, its object being the promotion of conviviality; but the fact of the toasts being favourable in their sentiments to the Castle policy was sufficient to render it distasteful to popular prejudices. It was but a natural consequence that the indignation should speedily turn from the club itself to its founder. Therefore Sheridan, once so popular, quickly became an object of suspicion and dislike, and the public determined to give him proof of their feelings on the first opportunity which presented itself.

All this was not of course the growth of a day. The club had been founded in February, 1753, and it was not until a year later that Sheridan's patrons seized upon an opportunity of venting their long-harboured resentment. It happened in this way. It was announced that 'the tragedy called Mahomet' would be performed at Smock Alley Theatre on the 2nd of February, 1754. The citizens, being familiar with the play, knew it contained several speeches denouncing wicked ministers of state and court favourites, which speeches they at once determined to distinguish by applause. Several of the actors, being aware of this, resolved to emphasize such passages by way of expressing their sympathies with the audience. When the night of that eventful 2nd of February arrived, the house was crowded, and it was readily seen that a spirit of mischief brooded over the pit; a place in which such spirits are popularly supposed to dwell in theatres and elsewhere. The principal characters in the tragedy were undertaken by Sheridan, Peg Woffington, and Digges, an actor whose handsome person, graceful bearing, and careful playing rendered him a popular favourite.

In the first act of 'Mahomet,' Digges, who played the part of Alcanor, delivered the following sentiment in a notably marked manner:

'If, ye powers divine!
Ye mark the movements of this nether world,
And bring them to account? Crush, crush those vipers,
Who, singled out by the community
To guard their rights, shall for a grasp of ore,
Or paltry office, sell them to the foe.'

So applicable were those lines considered by the audience to those who sat in high places that they were immediately greeted by thunders of applause, which ceased but to give place to a cry of 'Encore, encore,' with a vehemence that admitted of no refusal. In a moment the theatre was in an uproar. Digges therefore repeated the words, which were again applauded, and the play was then allowed to proceed. But throughout the night Alcanor's speeches savouring of the same character as this met with a like reception; whilst the finest efforts of the Woffington and Sheridan were passed over in silence. The demonstration of party spirit which had in this manner crept into the theatre might have ended here, if the play had not been again performed. Strange as it may seem that the manager allowed the tragedy to be repeated, it was yet scarcely in his power to decline producing it, as notices continually appeared in the *Dublin Journal* to the effect that, 'as the manager of the Theatre Royal is determined to give the greatest variety of plays in his power to the publick, he intends to repeat none that have been presented in the former part of the season, unless they should be particularly bespoke. He could wish that such ladies as want to see any particular play performed would send their commands to the box-keeper, according to the custom in London; for by this

method the manager could form a more certain judgment of what plays were most called for. There will be a memorandum book for the purpose kept by Mr. Neil at his house in Abbey Street, and there shall be at least a week's notice given of the day of performance of any such plays.'

Taking advantage of this custom, a vast number of ladies, probably at the desire of their lords, or such as they hoped to make their lords, crowded to Mr. Neil's house, and there entered their request that 'Mahomet' should be again performed. Before the month was out, it was therefore announced that the tragedy would be represented for the second time that season, on Saturday night, March the 2nd, 1754. Sheridan was fully aware of the storm which was brooding, and which might at any moment break above his head. It was his duty, therefore, to guard against it as far as possible, and for this purpose he, on the Friday morning previous to the representation of the play, requested the members of his company to meet him in the green-room. When they had assembled, he entered, bowed, and addressed them. He regretted that a party had become so universal in Dublin as to make its appearance on the stage, a most improper place for the display of political spirit; on account of this he thought it his duty to lay before them a rule by which they ought to act at such a juncture. He did not pretend to dictate to them regarding their private sentiments, but he considered it the business of an actor to divest himself as much as possible of such, and enter with all the spirit he was master of into the character he represented. But if an actor, in order to please part of the public, should by any unusual emphasis, gesture, or significant look, mark out a passage in his part which at another juncture he

would have passed by lightly, he stepped out of his feigned character into his natural one, than which nothing could be more disgusting or insolent to any auditor who came with no other intent but of seeing the play. Such a performer ought, he said, to be looked upon by the public as an incendiary, as one who throws the brand of discord amongst them; for, supposing persons of a different way of thinking should take it into their heads to resent and oppose this behaviour, the theatre, instead of serving as a place of entertainment, would become a scene of riot and disorder.

At this point Digges rose up, and said the drift of this lecture was evidently directed to him; Sheridan in reply acknowledged that he was the first actor he ever heard of who repeated a speech upon the encore of an audience; but he felt sure his compliance arose from the suddenness of the demand, and the want of time to reflect on the ill consequences which might have arisen from his acceding to the request. Digges then said that, as the demand was almost certain to be repeated the following night, he wished to know how he should act; to which the manager wisely made answer that he would give him no directions, but would leave him to do as he thought proper.

'Sir,' said Digges, 'if I should comply with the demand of the audience, and repeat the speech, am I to incur your censure?'

Sheridan replied, 'Not at all; I leave you to act in the matter as you think proper.'

This concluded the audience between the manager and his company. Next night, almost as soon as the doors were opened, the theatre was densely packed. The pit looked capable of dark things, the gallery dangerous; a feeling of excitement and apprehension

settled over the whole house; a storm brooded in the atmosphere. Nor was it long before it burst. The moment Digges made his appearance, he was greeted with universal applause; then silence settled on the house whilst it waited breathlessly on the delivery of the lines commencing 'Ye powers.' No sooner were these spoken than they were greeted with loud acclamations, mingled with cries of 'Encore, encore.' Digges, as if undecided, paused, when the cries burst out again with great fierceness; then Digges, making a motion of his hand to enforce silence, stepped forward and said 'it would give him the highest pleasure imaginable to comply with the request of the audience; but he had his private reasons for begging they would be so good as to excuse him, as his compliance would be greatly injurious to him.'

The cowardly insinuation conveyed in these words fired the house with indignation, and gave those present the long-sought-for pretext of expressing their feelings towards the manager. Accordingly, an angry and imperative cry of 'Sheridan, Sheridan,' went up from the pit, and was echoed by the gallery; on which Digges left the stage, and the curtain was ordered down. The manager was not inclined to comply with the request of the audience, but sent the prompter forward to say the actors were ready to perform the play, if suffered to do so; if not, all present could have their money returned to them. A fresh outburst followed the delivery of this message, and again cries for Sheridan rang through the house. Angered and agitated by this, the manager, who was standing behind the scenes, declared they had no right to call on him, and he would not obey them; saying which he went to his room and commenced to undress. He was

quickly followed by some of his friends, who, leaving the boxes, hurried round to entreat him to pacify the people, who were every moment becoming more enraged. To this request he firmly refused to accede. Looking back over the years of his management, it seemed to him that all his spirited exertions for the public entertainment, all his labours for the purification of the stage, were in a moment forgotten by those he had sought to serve and amuse. He was perhaps more grieved than angered; the hour had now arrived, he said, when he could no longer support the stage upon a footing of which the world had approved for many years, and he was therefore resolved to have done with it.

Even in his dressing-room the ominous sound of the angry storm reached him, and, believing it was the intention of the crowd to do him personal violence, he left the theatre, got into a chair, and was carried to his house in Dorset Street. By this time nothing could equal the uproar and confusion that raged amongst the audience; calls for the manager, deafening cries for vengeance on all court favourites, and shouts demanding the firing of the house, filled the theatre. In the midst of this Babel, the curtain went up, and the Woffington came forward, in hopes that she might be able to throw some oil upon the troubled waters; but in this hour her sovereign beauty had no effect upon the people, for she was not only a member of the obnoxious club, but its president; and those who had a little while before followed every inflection of her voice with rapture now refused to hear her speak. She therefore indignantly withdrew, and, as a last resource to assuage the fury of the people, Digges stepped on the stage. He was now the favourite of the hour, and immediately the storm abated to hear

that which he had to say. He told them the manager had not laid him under an injunction not to repeat the speech, and had not therefore incurred their deeply deplored indignation. But this acknowledgment had come too tardily; the hurricane, raging at its highest pitch, was not to be easily subdued.

Moreover, Sheridan had refused to obey the voice of the people and come forward, and this was in itself a sufficient and independent cause for anger and resentment; they were resolved he should apologize. Therefore they called for him once more, on which Digges told them he had left the house some time. The pit then held a consultation, the result of which was, two of its leaders, described as 'persons of condition and gravity,' rose up and requested the manager might be sent for, adding that the house would wait an hour for his return. Messages were therefore speedily dispatched to Dorset Street acquainting Sheridan of what had passed; but, true to his first resolution, he declined to obey those who had no authority to command him. Meanwhile the audience kept possession of the playhouse, and amused itself very much to its liking as the hour of grace wore on. At the expiration of that time, the two persons of condition and gravity rose up once more, and asked if Mr. Sheridan was forthcoming. As they obtained no satisfactory reply, the impatient crowd immediately set to work on the business of the night. The ladies were first carefully handed out, and, no sooner had the last of the [illegible] creatures betaken herself to her sedan, than a youth in the pit, who was eager for the fray, jumped up and cried out, 'God bless King George with three huzzas!' This invocation for so strange a method of benediction was regarded as the signal for attack; the mob therefore, the greater portion

of which consisted of men of condition, fell on the house with a ruthlessness engendered by long delay, and in five minutes the audience part of the theatre was a complete wreck. Not satisfied with this, the ring-leaders, swords in hand, jumped upon the stage, cut and slashed the finely painted curtain, which had cost a vast sum of money, smashed and tore the scenes which came within their reach, and then rushed to the wardrobe. Fortunately this had been well protected, and, being unable to break into it, the idea occurred to these ruffians to fire the house. They therefore dragged a grate full of burning coals into the middle of the box-room, left some broken doors upon them, and departed with the happy conviction that the whole building would be wrapt in flames in a little while; such a catastrophe was, however, fortunately prevented.

In the mean time, the treasurer, Benjamin Victor, seeing the theatre attacked, hastened to the Castle to inform the Lord-Lieutenant of the extreme danger to which the house was exposed. The Duke listened to him with all the patience and resignation with which one man hears of another's distress, and then suggested that Victor should go to the Lord Mayor. Arriving at the Mansion House, he found his lordship had been suddenly and sadly visited with a pain in his great toe, and so severe was the suffering of that afflicted member that it wholly prevented my Lord Mayor from mixing in this party warfare. From the mayor to the sheriffs, Victor next betook himself; but, strange to say, these gentlemen were not at home, nor were any of the city magistrates to be found, though it is a significant fact that the taverns were searched for them as places where they were most apt to be seen. At last, about one o'clock in the morning, Victor dis-

covered a deputy constable; but, alas! the captain of the guard refused to march under such a dignity, or rather indignity, for the said deputy constable is spoken of in Victor's pages as 'a low, mean, sorry scoundrel,' whose hand, it may be safely inferred, was never closed to the offer of a guinea.

The theatre was therefore left to its fate, and became a wreck. For a time all performances were impossible; but, it being partially repaired, its doors were again opened in a fortnight, in order that the actors and actresses, who, being deprived of their means of support, suffered most by the unhappy riot, might have a series of benefits. The first of these was given to Peg Woffington, who played in 'All for Love,' under the patronage of the Duke and Duchess of Dorset. On this occasion the town, as if to make reparation for its recent wrath, crowded once more to testify its appreciation of an old favourite who had become almost as a personal friend to her audiences; and who, though she usually performed four times a week, had never disappointed them once in three winters by affected illnesses, as was the habit of other actresses of consequence. 'Yet,' says Victor, who gives this information, 'I have often seen her on the stage when she ought to have been in her bed.'

The paper which advertised her benefit contained likewise the following notice inserted by Sheridan:—'Mr. Sheridan, lately manager of the Theatre Royal, thinks it necessary to acquaint the public that he has entirely quitted the stage, and will be no more concerned in the direction of it. He has lent the house to the performers during their benefits without any emolument to himself. He hoped to have been able before this time to have laid before the public a full vindication of his conduct,

but a near domestic concern has so far affected him for some days past that it was impossible for him to give that attention to the subject which it required. He hopes, however, to have it published soon, and in the mean time earnestly entreats of all candid and impartial persons that they will not give ear to the many stories and falsehoods which are industriously propagated to his prejudice. He makes no doubt of convincing all (who are to be convinced) that he has done nothing but what he ought to have done, and that he could not have acted otherwise consistent with the character of a good citizen or a good manager.'

He therefore let the theatre to his treasurer, Victor, and took his farewell of the stage in a pamphlet addressed to the town. Peg Woffington, with that generosity which endeared her to all, tarried to take part in the benefits of her fellow-players; then bidding good-bye for the last time, though she knew it not, to her native city, she crossed the Channel, and turned her face towards the English capital once more. Again she engaged with Rich, and made her reappearance at Covent Garden theatre on the 22nd of September, 1754, in the character of Maria in 'The Nonjuror,' when 'she drew a great house, was welcomed with great applause, and played the part as well as it could be played.' At this theatre she 'continued a delighting favourite,' says John Galt, 'until she left the stage.' This event happened three years later.

CHAPTER XII.

Diversions of the Polite World—My Lady Coventry—'A Little Lively sort of Fairy'—Masquerade at Somerset House—The Prince with the Pink Eyes—Juliet Disconcerted—The Player and the Peeress—A Scotch Venus—Lady Albemarle's Dream—Poor Lord Montford—General Braddock and Mrs. Upton—Entertainments Abound—Jack Spencer's Wedding.

DURING these years many strange things happened in the world which surrounded the actress. In London town, diversion continued to be cultivated as an art, and the brilliant current of fashionable life swept on untroubled even by the breath of political faction. So untroubled indeed that, when the graver members of society were concerned as to whether Mr. Pitt was in or out of the ministry, Mr. Chute met Dick Edgecumbe, a man of parts, who fluttered butterfly-like in the drawing-rooms of the great, and moth-like in the gambling-rooms of the clubs, where he sometimes burnt his wings, and asked him if he knew whether Mr. Pitt was out.

'Yes,' replied Edgecumbe.

'Why, how do you know?' asked his friend.

'Because,' answered he, 'I called at his door just now, and his porter told me so.'

Never, it seemed, had there been such doings, never such gossamer-like gossip floating in the summer atmosphere of the world of fashion. 'Come to town,' writes my Lady Hervey to a friend, in the third month of the year 1756, 'and you will hear of ladies of quality who uphold footmen in insulting gentlemen, and of ladies who steal not only hearts, but gold boxes. In short, you will see and hear of every kind of luxury and of vice, without delicacy, taste, or pleasure.' In the brilliant circles of fashionable life Lady Coventry was the

observed of all observers, and a thousand stories were told about her and her grave young lord, whom she called her 'dear Cov.' Mrs. Piozzi, speaking of the countess, whom she styles 'the true perfection of female beauty,' says, when she went to the playhouse, 'she was received with repeated bursts of applause by the pit and galleries. Mrs. Delany, at this time staying in London, likewise gives us a description curious to read of the countess, now in the very heyday of her beauty. 'Yesterday after chapel,' she writes from Whitehall, 'the Duchess (of Portsmouth) brought home Lady Coventry to feast me, and *a feast she was.* She is a fine figure, and vastly handsome, notwithstanding a silly look sometimes about her mouth; she has a thousand airs, but with a sort of innocence that diverts one. Her dress was a black silk sack, made for a large hoop. which she wore without any, and it trailed a yard on the ground; she had on a cobweb laced handkerchief, a pink satin long cloke, lined with ermine, mixed with squirrel skins; on her head a French cap that just covered the top of her head, and stood in the form of a butterfly with its wings not quite extended, frilled sort of lappets crossed under her chin, and tied with pink and green ribbon, a head-dress that would have charmed a *shepherd.* She has a thousand dimples and prettiness in her cheeks, her eyes a little drooping at the corners, but fine for all that.'

When the beauty was bidden to the great masquerade at Somerset House, 'about which all the world of London is wild,' she must invite George Selwyn, who was loved well by all the world in general and the countess in particular, to see her fine dress for the occasion, which was black covered all over with silver spots the size of

a shilling. 'La,' said the wit, 'you will be change for a guinea.' Then, when she went to Somerset House, who was there but Lady Carysfort's sister, Miss Allen, 'a little lively sort of a fairy,' who was not conversant with the great world, and had not yet been to Court, and had not seen my Lady Coventry before. So at the close of the night, when people began to unmask, Miss Allen, still keeping her face covered, went up to the countess, and said she, 'I have indeed heard a great deal of this lady's beauty, but it surpasses all I have expected.'

'What!' said my lady, in great surprise, 'have you never seen me before?'

Standing close by was a young man with a florid face, bunches of white eyebrows, and pink lids, who, being equally astonished, asked Miss Allen, 'Are you not an Englishwoman?'

Then answered this lively sort of fairy, 'I don't know whether I may be called an Englishwoman, but I am just come from New York upon the fame of this lady, whose beauty is talked of far and near, and I think I came for a very good purpose.'

Lady Coventry marched off in high satisfaction; but the pink-lidded young man lingered, as young men will, and the young lady made him many witty speeches, as young ladies will—when they can.

'Come,' said he at last, 'I must see who has entertained me so well,' and he made her sit down.

'Hands off,' said she, archly enough—she was a gay young thing. 'You know,' she added, 'that is impertinent.' But, though her words reproved him, her eyes shone brightly through her satin mask. Then Lady Carysfort beckoned her to approach.

'Do you know,' she whispered, 'it is Prince Edward you are talking to?'

Whereon the fairy, unlike her Ariel sisters, was covered with vast confusion; but, being a fairy, she was cute, and went back to the prince's side, and pretended she did not know who he was, and treated him as she had done before, until an opportunity offered, when she slipped away from him. Presently she sat down in a corner where she believed herself unseen, and took off her mask to cool her face. But the beautiful young prince had watched the fairy from under his pink lids all the while, and now came and seated himself beside her, and took her hand in his very gently, and asked, thinking more of tarts than of hearts at that moment, if she knew her way to the room where coffee was served. She replied she did not, when he offered to conduct her thither, and so they set off to seek their supper, through the dense forest of humanity, meeting many adventures by the way, till at last they came to their journey's end, and there was a supper-table laid as if by magic, glittering with silver and with gold that reflected a vast number of star-like lights, and crowded with strange, fragile flowers. The prince helped the fairy to numerous dishes, and to wines sparkling in many-coloured glasses, and they enjoyed themselves vastly, until the clock struck one, when an elderly fairy —for sure such she must have been, as she called herself the young fairy's mother—came up and carried her away in a great rumbling coach, leaving the beautiful young prince with the pink lids disconsolate.

Among others, George Anne Bellamy has a story to tell of my Lady Coventry, though it is not an over-pleasant one. When Maria Gunning came over from

Ireland, she remembered the friendly office which the Bellamy had formerly done her family, and again besought other favours at the actress's hands. Indeed it was only a couple of days before her marriage that she had paid the player a visit concerning a little pecuniary business, which resulted in George Anne accepting a note of hand for cash received. Time passed, Maria Gunning became Countess of Coventry, but Miss Bellamy saw her no more till one night when the actress was playing Juliet in Covent Garden to a great house, on which occasion the beauty sat in a stage box in company with some other ladies of the highest distinction. During the first part of the play all went well; but, when the tragic moment arrived in which the love-sick Juliet is about to drink the poisoned draught, a loud laugh proceeding from her ladyship's box, and indeed, for the matter of that, from her ladyship's lips, fell upon the silent house. So disconcerted was Juliet that not only was she unable to drink the poisoned draught, but she was likewise rendered incapable of proceeding with her part; she therefore advanced to the footlights and begged permission to retire until she should be able to recover herself. The audience was incensed, and insisted on the ladies quitting the playhouse; mortified by which, the countess said to a gentleman in a neighbouring box, who reproached her, that, since she had witnessed the Cibber as Juliet, she could not bear to see the Bellamy play that part. However, Lord Eglington, who was in the countess's company at the time, subsequently coming round to the green-room to apologize, assured the blue-eyed Bellamy that no offence had been meant to her, but that the laugh Lady Coventry had broke out into had been involuntary, and had been excited by her

twirling an orange upon her finger, and some ridiculous thing that was said upon the occasion.' Whatever caused the laughter, Miss. Bellamy was highly incensed, and next morning dispatched her house steward with the note of hand Lady Coventry had given her a few days previous to her marriage, bidding him to demand immediate payment of it from her ladyship. When the man reached Lady Coventry's house, he was informed her ladyship was taking the air on horseback, when it was his pleasure to wait her return. Then he presented her with a note of hand.

'What,' quoth she, 'is it from Miss Bellamy the actress?'

To which the man replied it was; upon which her ladyship's beautiful countenance flushed indignantly.

'If she is impertinent,' said the countess, 'I will have her hissed off the stage.'

On this the man made bold to say that 'continuing on the stage was a matter of indifference to his mistress; but, if she chose to perform, it was not in her ladyship's power to prevent it.' Having made which remark, he speedily left the house; but he was soon overtaken by a messenger, who said the money would be shortly sent —a promise never fulfilled.

The second of the Gunnings, the beautiful Betty, otherwise Elizabeth, Duchess of Hamilton, had not yet an opportunity of proving her talent for further matrimonial alliances with ducal houses, but lived in peaceful retirement, giving the world sons destined to become dukes. But another Scotch duchess was at this time affording much diversion to her contemporaries. This was Her Grace of Gordon, 'who looks like a raw-boned Scotch metaphysician, who has got

a red face by drinking water.' One day at a court drawing-room the duchess—now a widow of two years' standing—met Stanislaus, King of Poland; she did not speak to him, but she perceived he was a very fine man, and being a woman of prompt action, she sent one of the foreign ministers next day to invite His Majesty to dine with her. Stanislaus went. The moment he entered Her Grace's drawing-room, her two little sons, dressed as nearly as decency would permit like Cupids, and equipped with bows and arrows, jumped forward and shot at him. Their aims were not of the best, and one of the arrows was so far from striking his heart that it almost put out his eye, and prevented him seeing the red-skinned Scotch Venus reclining in as graceful a repose as her raw bones would permit. The king, having his sight left him by the Cupids, was not smitten by such loveliness as she displayed, and Her Grace was subsequently content with becoming the wife of Colonel Saates Morris.

Foreigners were indeed the fashion at this time in London society, always provided they were not Germans, of which there was ever a plentiful supply at Court. 'Have you heard of a Countess Chamfelt, a Bohemian rich and hideous, who is arrived here, and is under the protection of Lady Caroline Petersham?' writes Horace Walpole to George Montagu. 'She has a great facility for languages, and has already learned "damn you and kiss me." I beg her pardon; I believe she never uses the former but upon the miscarriage of the latter; in short, as Doddington says, she has the honour of performing at most courts in Europe.' The same worthy authority tells us a story of another foreigner which admirably illustrates the manners of the times. 'There

is a young Frenchman here,' he writes to Richard Bentley, 'called Monsieur Herault. Lady Harrington carried him and his governor to sup with her and Miss Ashe at a tavern t'other night. I have long said that the French were relapsed into barbarity, and quite ignorant of the world. You shall judge: in the first place, the young man was bashful; in the next, the governor, so ignorant as not to have heard of women of fashion carrying men to a tavern, thought it incumbent on him to do the honours for his pupil, who was as modest and as much in a state of nature as the ladies themselves, and hazarded some familiarities with Lady Harrington. The consequence was that the next morning she sent a card to both, to desire they would not come to her ball that evening, to which she had invited them, and to beg the favour of them never to come to the house again.'

But all such gossip as this gave place to the wonderful story concerning Lady Albemarle, daughter of Charles, fifth Duke of Richmond, who two nights together dreamt she saw and took leave of her lord, and the dream was put in the newspapers, and talked of by all the town, and furnished the chief subject in the correspondence dated December, 1754. The most graphic narration of the story comes from Walpole's pen. Lord Albemarle died suddenly at Paris, from which gay city an express containing the news was sent to his son, Lord Bury, then at Windsor, who came to town betimes and found his mother and sisters at breakfast. Walpole shall tell the rest.

'"Lord, child," said my Lady Albemarle, "what brings you here to town so early?"

'He said he had been sent for.

'Says she, "You are not well?"

'"Yes," replied Lord Bury, "I am, but a little flustered with something I have heard."

'"Let me feel your pulse," said Lady Albemarle. "Oh!" continued she, "your father is dead!"

'"Lord, madam!" said Lord Bury, "how could that come into your head? I should rather have imagined that you would have thought it was my poor brother William" (who is just gone to Lisbon for his health).

'"No," said my Lady Albemarle, "I know it is your father; I dreamt last night that he was dead, and came to take leave of me!" and immediately swooned.

'I do believe,' adds Walpole, 'the dream happened, and happened right among the millions of dreams that do not hit.' When Lady Temple tells the story, she adds that my Lady Albemarle saw her lord all dressed in white. 'The same thing,' she adds, 'happened before the Duke of Richmond's death, and often has happened before the death of any of her family.'

Then there was a curious story, which was likewise in the papers, of another dream which was realized in a strange manner. One Mr. Dalker, it was recounted, visited an ancient mansion situated in the country, where among other things of interest he saw the figure of a marble lion, represented as open-mouthed and enraged. 'There's my enemy,' said the poor man. 'I have more than once dreamed that I should owe my death to a lion.' And so saying, and smiling in scorn as he spoke, he thrust his arm into the lion's mouth. But within was an iron spike, which severely lacerated his hand, and, a mortification ensuing, he died in consequence. Then at the same time occurred Lord Montford's death, a more extraordinary story yet.

My lord, who was High Steward of the town of Cambridge, was a good-natured and agreeable man enough, with the most compendious understanding. In the first month of the year 1755, he consulted several persons on the easiest method of ending life. Next he invited a company to dinner for the day after his death, and ordered a supper at White's, where he supped likewise the night before. In the midst of this, whilst wine and wit flowed freely, Lord Robert Bertie drank to him a happy new year; he suddenly clapped his hands to his eyes. Next day he sent for his lawyer, as Lady Hervey tells us in her interesting letters, made his will, and had it read over three times, that there might be no flaw or room for dispute. Afterwards he asked the lawyer if it would stand good though a man were to shoot himself, who assured him it would; on which his lordship went into his bed-room and shot himself. 'These things,' writes my Lady Hervey, 'are what our countrymen attribute to more reflection, solid reasoning, and greater resolution than other people are masters of; I impute them to more phlegmatic constitutions, thicker and more uncertain blood, and lower spirits; natural effects of our climate on our bodies, and therefore a physical evil, not a moral excellence. I have as yet heard no reason assigned for this event but that *tædium vitæ* which is so frequent in this country. Happy shall I be when I return to that country where the air, the people, and the manner of living dispose one to cheerfulness, and to enjoy life, not destroy it.'

Lord Montford's tragic death did not, however, [redacted]ch impression on some of his friends. Lord [redacted]m George II. declared was the handsomest

man in England, when he heard the news, said, with an air of vast philosophy, 'Well, I am sorry for poor Montford, but it is the part of a wise man to make the best of every misfortune—I shall now have the best cook in England.' This remark was made before Lord Anson, who likewise loved the things of this earth properly cooked. The late earl's *chef* would not, however, promise to bestow his service on my Lord Lincoln till he knew if the present earl would retain him. When it was decided that he would not, Lord Lincoln proposed that he should enter into his service, but the great *chef* was already engaged by my Lord Anson. Great was the quarrel that ensued between these noble gentlemen concerning a cook; so great that at one time it was considered blood could alone atone for this breach of friendship and deplorable selfishness. The *chef* was, however, spared the honour of having a duel fought for his sake. A more lively story than this soon amused the town, the hero of which was General Braddock, the heroine Mrs. Upton. The lady loved him so well that she parted with all her pin money to him; the gallant man considered it but a due reward for his tenderness, and yet craved for more. Pressing her one day for further supplies, she pulled out her purse to show him she had but twelve or fourteen shillings left. He twitched it from her. 'Let me see,' said the gallant man, and sure enough he found five guineas tied up at the other end; possessing himself of which, he flung back the empty purse in her face. 'Did you mean to cheat me?' he said, indignantly, and he went out of the house; and Mrs. Upton saw her lover no more. The town was, however, much diverted by her loss.

All through the fashionable seasons of these years

the great houses entertained; suppers, breakfasts, dinners, and assemblies continually kept the polite part of the town in motion. My Lady Norfolk's receptions were distinguished by their special magnificence, and the vast crowds that flocked to them. It was at one of these that Charles Townshend, who had a reputation for wit and many other things, heard somebody say that my Lady Falmouth, who had a great many diamonds on, had a very fine stomach. 'By Gad,' said he, 'my lord has a better.' My Lady Norfolk threw wide the doors of all her rooms on these occasions, when, according to one of the gossips who attended them, 'the tapestry, the embroidered bed, the illuminations, the glasses, the lightness and novelty of the ornaments and the ceilings were pronounced delightful.' Then my Lady Lincoln, whose husband was Auditor of the Exchequer, gave vast assemblies in the Exchequer House; when Westminster Hall was illuminated for chairs, the passage from it hung with green baize and coloured lamps, and the cloisters ornamented with volterra vases; the whole presenting the prettiest scene in the world. 'Gaiety of all kinds reigns here at present,' writes Lady Hervey in 1755. 'Balls, masquerades, and parties for play, and suppers abound so much that not only each night furnishes one, but many nights produce two or three. That at Lord Granville's has made a very great match. Mr. Spencer there fell in love with one of the daughters of Sir Cecil Bishop, who has a great many children, and a small estate.'

This merry gentleman was the son of the Honourable Jack Spencer, the favourite grandson of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. Having disinherited to the utmost of her power his eldest brother, Charles, Duke of Marl-

borough, she had made a settlement of a very great estate upon the Honourable Jack and his sons, which they were to forfeit if any of them should ever accept any employment military or civil, or any pension from any king or queen of the realm. 'This, I think,' the remarkable woman wrote when she had made her will, 'ought to please everybody; for it will secure my heirs in being very considerable men. None of them can put on a fool's coat, and take posts from soldiers of experience and service, who never did anything but kill pheasants and partridges.' The fortune of nigh £30,000 a year, which she left the Honourable Jack, did not help by any means to prolong his life; for he died at the age of six-and-thirty, 'because,' says Horace Walpole, briefly, 'he would not be abridged of those invaluable blessings of an English subject, brandy, small beer, and tobacco.'

His son, whom Lady Hervey mentions, and who afterwards became first Earl Spencer, did not marry the beautiful Miss Bishop, but rather Miss Poyntz, whose nuptial festivals, which took place in December, 1755 caused much amusement to the town. 'One has heard of nothing for some time past,' writes Lady Hervey 'but the magnificence, or rather the silly, vain profusion on account of Mr. Spencer's wedding; and, what is more extraordinary is, that it is quite disagreeable to both the young people, and entirely the effect of the vanity and folly of Lady Cowper, Mr. Spencer's mother. They came to town from Althorp, where they were married, with three coaches and six horses, and two hundred horsemen. The villages through which they passed were put into the greatest consternation; some of the poor people shut themselves up in their houses and cottages, barricading themselves up as well as they

could. Those who were more resolute or more desperate armed themselves with pitchforks, spits, and spades; all crying out it was the *invasion* which was come; and to be sure, by the coaches and six horses, both the Pretender and King of France were come too. In short, great was the alarm, and happy they were when this formidable cavalcade passed by without setting fire to the habitations, or murdering the inhabitants.'

Then, when the bride and bridegroom came to town, they were entertained with routs and assemblies, and in return gave entertainments remarkable for their vast displays of splendour. Then there were great suppers at my Lord Hertford's, where all the world of fashion was duly bidden, and where the king's mistress, my Lady Yarmouth, 'who loved nothing so much as cramming,' enjoyed herself to such an extent that she was unable to join in the minuet, in which Lady Rochford made so graceful a figure. This was indeed a right merry time. In every quarter of the town during the fashionable seasons fiddles sounded, tapers blazed, and courtly figures glided over waxed floors.

CHAPTER XIII.

Another Side of London Life—Men of Letters—The Poverty of Poets—The Ingenious Samuel Boyse—His Wretched Life and Miserable Death—Picture of a Poet—Richard Savage—A Man of Melancholy Aspect—A Noble Patron—An Author to be Let—The Volunteer Laureate—Striving to Live—Life in Bristol—Death in a Prison.

THERE is another side to this sparkling, vivacious London life, more interesting, if sorrow-fraught, glimpses of which we catch in the careers of various men of

letters of this period. Up and down Fleet Street and the Strand, thin-figured, round-shouldered, haggard-faced men pass and repass; the pockets of their thread-bare coats filled with manuscripts, poems for Mr. Cave's *Gentleman's Magazine*, paragraphs for Robert Dodsley's *Morning Chronicle*, pamphets for Mr. John Newbery's press; all of which have been conceived in some miserable garret, penned in a coffee-house box, or scrawled at midnight on a tavern table.

Though the town at this time could boast a full supply of magazine's reviews, and journals,* yet literature was at a low ebb, and the life of the Grub Street † hack was one of need and sore privation. 'I have a reluctance to think of living among the facetious barbarians of London,' writes David Hume from Paris. 'Letters are there held in no honour. The taste for literature is neither decayed nor depraved here, as with the barbarians who inhabit the banks of the Thames.' And Horace Walpole tells a friend that he 'shuns authors, and would never,' says he, 'be one myself, if it obliged me to keep such bad company.' The nobility preferred the society of gamesters, fiddlers, and buffoons to that of men of letters; whilst the middle class, ever following in the wake of the greater current, treated writers by profession with a contempt which it must be confessed their conduct oftentimes deserved.

It is true that Pope had been lifted to independence by powerful patronage, and could afford to sneer in many a bitter line at the Grub Street scribblers; that Gay,

* A full and curious list of which is given in Nichol's *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iv, p. 39.

† Grub Street, according to Johnson, was 'the name of a street in London much inhabited by writers of small histories, dictionaries, and temporary poems; whence any mean production is called Grub Street.'

concerning whom a king and a duchess had wrangled at a drawing-room in St. James's, was likewise protected by the great; that Young had been pensioned by Sir Robert Walpole; but Fielding, after working arduously as a dramatist, novelist, and hack-writer for the journals of the day, quitted England worn out in health and wrecked in fortune, to die in exile; Samuel Richardson alone saved himself from want by keeping shop; both Savage and Boyse starved; Johnson was cast into a sponging-house; Thomson wanted shoes, and would have wanted bread, but for a player's charity;* Collins died neglected and mad; and Smollett, after long years spent in translating, compiling, reviewing, dramatising, and novel-writing for a bare subsistence, cried out in bitterness against 'the incredible labour and chagrin' of his life. To be a hack-writer was indeed a sorry mortal, to be a poet was a man acquainted with wretchedness. 'All that is squalid and miserable,' writes Lord Macaulay, speaking of this period, 'might now be summed up in the word poet. That word denoted a creature dressed like a scarecrow, familiar with compters and sponging-houses, and perfectly qualified to decide on the comparative merits of the Common Side in the King's Bench

* John Galt, in his *Lives of the Players*, says that Quin, 'hearing Thomson, the poet of the "Seasons," was confined in a sponging-house for a debt of about seventy pounds, he repaired to the place. Thomson was a good deal disconcerted at seeing him, and the more so as Quin told him he had come to sup with him, and that, as he supposed it would have been inconvenient to have had the supper dressed at the place they were in, he had ordered it from an adjacent tavern, and as a prelude half-a-dozen of claret was introduced. Supper being over, Quin said, "It is time now we should balance accounts. The pleasure I have had in perusing your works, I cannot estimate at less than a hundred pounds, and I insist on now acquitting the debt." On saying this, he put down a note, and took his leave without waiting for a reply.'

prison, and of Mount Scoundrel in the Fleet. Even the poorest pitied him; and they might well pity him. For, if their condition was equally abject, their aspirations were not equally high, nor their sense of insult equally acute. To lodge in a garret up four pair of stairs, to dine in a cellar among footmen out of place, to translate ten hours a day for the wages of a ditcher, to be hunted by bailiffs from one haunt of beggary and pestilence to another, from Grub Street to St. George's Fields, and from St. George's Fields to the alleys behind St. Martin's Church, to sleep on a bulk in June, and amidst the ashes of a glass-house in December, to die in a hospital and to be buried in a parish vault, was the fate of more than one writer, who, if he had lived in our time, would have found encouragement and munificence in Albemarle Street or in Paternoster Row.'

Of such was Samuel Boyse, 'well known by his ingenious productions,' whose sad, improvident course was typical of his class. The son of 'a learned, pious, and useful divine,' he had by some ill chance strayed into the perilous paths of literature, and professed himself a poet. His genius gave such early promise that it raised him up many friends, and would have rendered his name illustrious, but that his natural indolence and self-indulgence lowered him, until he grew to be that most miserable thing, a Grub Street scribbler. As such he became, as a biographer mildly puts it, 'a man of no parts whatever; his political creed being influenced by his necessities.' In other words, his talents were for sale to the politician desiring an anonymous scourge for his opponent, to the dependent choosing to flatter his patron. Now we find him dedicating an ode entitled 'The Olive' to Sir Robert Walpole, for which he

received ten guineas; then dedicating a volume of poems to the Countess of Eglington, a lady of many accomplishments; and again writing an elegant elegy on the death of the Viscountess Stormount, called 'The Tears of the Muses;' for her ladyship, being the patroness of men of wit, and possessing a taste in the sciences, was one for whose loss the mystic nine were supposed to weep. The guineas which these and other effusions of a like kind afforded him brought him but little benefit. Whilst they lasted, he of course forsook the Irish ordinary in Shoe Lane, or the yet more squalid eating-house in Porridge Island, where he and his fellows, when quite penniless, would stand to sniff the scent of that which they might not enjoy, and now hastened to the 'Rose and Crown' ordinary close by Covent Garden, there to partake of a dainty supper and drink rare wines, the cost of which left him penniless on the morrow. Then came letters of supplication to persons of distinction; 'a freedom,' says one of his contemporaries, 'to which he was entitled by the power of his genius;' and odes, the object of which was to gain a guinea or two from those they flattered. When such failed, the poet would turn to work and pen rhymes for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the proprietor of which paid him by the hundred lines, 'which, after a while, he wanted to make what is called the long hundred,' or write a history for the same publisher, for which he was paid half-a-guinea a week, his labour including not only the composition of 'a work not destitute of merit,' but proof-correcting likewise.

This lack of generosity on the part of Mr. Edward Cave somewhat prepares us for the miserable picture which Shiels has given us of the poor poet. Shiels was

himself a child of the Muses; sad to say, an unsuccessful child, as may be gathered from the fact that, when he wrote his 'Lives of the Poets,' his publisher, to secure their sale, paid Theo Cibber, then a prisoner for debt, the sum of ten guineas for allowing his name to be affixed to the title-page as the author. Shiels, in speaking of Boyse, tells us his misery was extreme. 'He had not,' he writes, 'a shirt, a coat, or any kind of apparel to put on; the sheets in which he lay were carried to the pawnbrokers, and he was obliged to be confined to bed with no other covering than a blanket. He had little support but what he got by writing letters to his friends in the most abject style. Whoever had seen him in this study must have thought the object singular enough. He sat up in bed with the blanket wrapped about him, through which he had cut a hole large enough to admit his arm, and, placing the paper upon his knee, scribbled in the best manner he could the verses he was obliged to make. Whatever he got by these or any of his begging letters, was but just sufficient for the preservation of life. And perhaps he would have remained much longer in this distressful state, had not a compassionate gentleman, upon hearing the circumstances, ordered his clothes to be taken out of pawn.'

This compassionate gentleman was Samuel Johnson, who, being a contributor to the same magazine, had become acquainted with the poor poet. Hearing now of his distress, and remembering the days when he 'subsisted himself for a considerable space of time upon the scanty pittance of fourpence halfpenny per day,' and had eaten his dinner at the ordinary at St. John's Gate behind a screen, because he was ashamed of his ragged clothes, Johnson collected a sum of money to redeem

such articles of attire for the distressed poet as would enable him to venture forth among his more prosaic fellow-creatures, with due deference to a sense of what they termed decency. The sum necessary for this laudable purpose was collected by sixpences, 'at a time when to me,' Johnson afterwards remarked, 'sixpence was a serious consideration.' This charity availed the poet little, for the clothes were soon again in the possession of the pawnbroker, and for the future, according to Shiels, 'whenever his distresses so pressed him as to induce him to dispose of his shirt, he fell upon an artificial method of supplying one. He cut some white paper in slips, which he tied round his wrists, and in the same way supplied his neck. In this manner he frequently appeared abroad, with the additional inconvenience of want of breeches.' The charming simplicity of this costume, which in Arcadia would have been regarded as superfluous, was considered insufficient in the vicinity of Fleet Street. 'He was once sent for in a hurry to the house of a printer who had employed him to write a poem for his magazine,' writes Shiels. 'Boyse then was without breeches or waistcoat, but was yet possessed of a coat, which he threw upon him, and in this ridiculous manner went to the printer's house, where he found several women, whom his extraordinary appearance obliged immediately to retire.'

His shifts to obtain money were indeed pitiful. He sometimes ordered his wife—for he had married when barely eighteen—to inform his friends he was just expiring; by which artifice he worked on their compassion, though he frequently excited their anger when next day they by accident encountered him whom they had believed was at that moment on the point of death.

Yet this man, who was reduced to such sad straits, was the writer of several charming poems, one of which 'The Deity,' Fielding speaks of as a 'very noble composition;' an opinion Hervey, author of 'The Meditations,' endorses by speaking of it as 'very beautiful, sublime, and instructive; quite poetical, truly evangelical, and admirably fitted to delight and comfort the heart.' Moreover, he laboured hard. 'I have all last summer,' he writes in 1741, 'been employed by Mr. Cave in French translations; a province highly agreeable to me, and the most profitable business stirring. I have been since last September almost constantly with Dr. Douglas, in the slavish work of index-making, *alias* word-catching, and am only now interrupted by his "Osteology," which takes up his whole attention. I have the prospect of having a new translation from the French in a few days; but booksellers are so undistinguishing, and authors, or rather scribblers, so plenty, that learning, unless supported, bids fair to starve between them. I hope the best, and would endeavour, as far as I could, to support a good character in a literary way.'

Yet he suffered from hunger and nakedness, and, to complete the history of his miseries, was cast into a sponging-house, from whence he cries out to Cave, his employer, for help. 'I am every moment,' writes the poor poet, 'threatened to be turned out here, because I have not money to pay for my bed two nights past, which is usually paid beforehand; and I am loth to go into the compter till I can see if my affairs can possibly be made up. I hope, therefore, you will have the humanity to send me half-a-guinea for support, till I finish your papers in my hands. I humbly entreat your answer, having not tasted anything since Tuesday

evening I came here: and my coat will be taken off my back for the charge of the bed; so that I must go into the prison naked, which is too shocking for me to think of.'

He was soon released, and was in 'the enjoyment of serene melancholy;' for his spouse—who, by the way, had during life entertained very liberal views regarding the duties pertaining to matrimony—had now gone to that bourne from whence wives never return, leaving the poet to nurse his sorrows and a pet dog, which he was wont to carry in his arms, because it gave him the air of a man of taste, and which he decorated with a piece of black ribbon as expressive of the loss which both he and the puppy sustained for their late mistress. Boyse died in the year 1749, at the age of fifty-one. Mr. Giles, described as 'a late collector of poems,' says he was found dead in his bed in a wretched garret in Whitefriars, with the pen in his hand in the act of writing; but Johnson assured Mr. Nichols that during a fit of intoxication he was run over by a coach; whilst Mr. Francis Stewart declared he was attacked in Westminster by two or three soldiers, who not only robbed him, but used him so barbarously that he died from the effects. In any case, his life ended in misery, and a pauper's grave received his body.

A scarcely less miserable poet was Savage, a man of melancholy aspect, of a thin habit of body, with a voice tremulous and mournful, and manners elegant and graceful. He was the son of Anne, Countess of Macclesfield, unlawfully begotten by Earl Rivers; his mother hated him from the hour of his birth, and persecuted him till that of his death. Bound 'prentice

to a shoemaker in Holborn, he might have lived a respectable tradesman, if accident had not made known to him the secret of his birth by means of some papers left in the possession of an old nurse; or had not the Muses discovered to him the fact that he was richly dowered with the fatal gift of song. Spurned by the woman who bore him, and through her machinations left penniless by his adulterous father, he spent his time, as Johnson writes, 'in mean expedients and tormenting suspense, living for the greatest part in the fear of prosecutions from his creditors, and consequently skulking in obscure parts of the town, of which he was no stranger to the remotest corner.'

At such times it was his habit to lie in bed all day, getting up only when darkness came, and stealing out into the night to visit an acquaintance, sell a few verses he had written, and wander about in the enjoyment of that liberty which he might not enjoy by day; returning to his garret before morn and the bailiffs awoke. Occasionally, and in happier times, he lived in luxury at the tables of the great, whom the exercise of his talents, the fascination of his manners, and the sprightliness of his conversation, delighted; until he disgusted them by his irregularities, when the wretched Bohemian was turned from their doors in anger and disgrace, and was again reduced to the uttermost depths of hunger and despair.

One of the noble patrons who bore with his dissipated ways was my Lord Tyrconnel, an Irish peer. His lordship, upon the poet laying aside a design of exposing his guilty mother's cruelties, consented to receive him into his household, to treat him as one of his family, and, moreover, to allow him an income

of two hundred a year. This, as his biographer states, was the golden part of the poet's life. 'For a time he had no reason to complain of fortune; his appearance was splendid, his expenses large, and his acquaintance extensive. He was courted by all who endeavoured to be thought men of genius, and caressed by all who valued themselves upon a refined taste. To admire Mr. Savage was a proof of discernment, and to be acquainted with him was a title to poetical reputation. His presence was sufficient to make any place of public entertainment popular; and his approbation and example constituted the fashion. So powerful is genius, when it is invested with the glitter of affluence. Men willingly pay to fortune that regard which they owe to merit, and are pleased when they have an opportunity at once of gratifying their vanity and practising their duty.'

It was whilst under the protection of my Lord Tyrconnel, at a time when he fondly believed himself removed for ever above the mean expedients of a hack-writer's existence, that he published a pamphlet called 'An Author to be Let; being a proposal, humbly addressed to the consideration of the knights, esquires, gentlemen, and other wonderful and weighty members of the Solid and Ancient Society of the Bathos; by their associate and well-wisher Iscariot Hackney.' This was written to satirize the Grub Street scribblers, of whom he had many bitter recollections. Johnson, in speaking of it, declares that in this pamphlet Savage has left 'exact observations on human life, which would do honour to the greatest names.' That it was a mirror in which those satirized saw themselves reflected in a manner most true to nature, was at once

evident from the fact that several of them accused Savage of making use of their confidences for the purpose of holding them up to public scorn. No more forcible picture of the swarming tribe who contributed so much to the literature of the day—a race now for ever, happily, extinct—who stung in pamphlets, flattered in odes, slandered in paragraphs, translated, plagiarized, compiled, and starved, can be given than by quoting a few passages from this pamphlet, now almost wholly unknown.

In the preface, he says, most of the scribblers are 'persons of a very low parentage, and without any pretence of merit are aspiring to the rank of gentlemen. Thus they become all economists. Poverty is the consequence of all economy, and dirty tricks the consequence of their poverty. Though they are sad writers, they might have been good mechanics; and therefore, by endeavouring to shine in spheres to which they are unequal, are guilty of depriving the public of many that might have been its useful members. Had not the great Mr. Dennis, the son of a saddler, better have been a common parish crier than a poet or critic? Had it not been an honester and more decent livelihood for Mr. Norton (Daniel de Foe's son of love, by a lady who vended oysters) to have dealt in a fish-market than to be dealing out the dialects of Billingsgate and detraction in the *Flying Post?* Should not Dick Morley rather have been blacking shoes at the corners of streets (to which it is well known his industrious and more prudent younger brother submitted) than blackening reputations in the *Weekly Journal?* The blackening of the brush from the Japan pot is so useful and ornamental, that it is frequently called honour; but the dash

of Dick's pen, so often dipped in an ink standish, is dirty and detrimental, consequently dishonour. So that Dick and his brother illustrate St. Paul's saying, "Some are made to honour, and some to dishonour." Had it not been more decent for Mr. Roome to have sung psalms, according to education, in an anabaptist meeting than to have been altering "The Jovial Crew," or "Merry Beggars," into a wicked imitation of the "Beggar's Opera"? When Mrs. Haywood ceased to be a strolling actress, why might not the lady (though once a theatrical queen) have subsisted by turning washer-woman? Has not the fall of greatness been a frequent distress in all ages? She might have considered the sullied linen growing white in her pretty red hands, as an emblem of her soul, were it well scoured by repentance for the sins of her youth; but she rather chose starving, by writing novels of intrigue, to teach young heiresses the art of running away with fortune-hunters, and scandalizing persons of the highest worth and distinction. When this lady, or these gentlemen, are asked why they abuse such and such persons, their answer is they are obliged to write for want of money, and to abuse for want of other subjects. Is want of money an excuse for picking pockets, or, what is worse, taking away a man's good name? Is the poverty of Moore's genius an excuse for filching Pope's lines? And appears not the theft in his comedy as plain as if a cinder wench should steal a gold watch, and afterwards wear it?'

So much for the preface, which could not at least be accused of ambiguity; then comes the autobiographical details of the career of Iscariot Hackney, the Grub Street scribbler. Whilst a boy he developed a genius for mischief, carried tales from one lad to another, and

then to the master, to have them whipped; and always, when he committed a fault himself, laid the blame on another; a sure prognostic of his future abilities as a politician. When he grew to be a youth, he hooted at any unfortunate, ill-dressed person in the street, if he looked like a gentleman; a certain sign of his talents as a critic. As he grew to manhood, with a natural sourness of temper, a droll solemnity of countenance, and a dry manner of joking upon such accidents as fools who value themselves upon humanity would be apt to compassionate, he set up for a man of humour about town; and as he had, furthermore, a propensity to sneer upon all mankind, especially those who imagined they could oblige him, he became a writer. 'Soon after,' Iscariot says, painting a portrait in which several persons saw themselves respectively represented, 'I was employed by Curll to write a merry tale, the wit of which was its obscenity. This we agreed to palm upon the world for a posthumous piece of Mr. Prior. However, a certain lady, celebrated for certain liberties, had a curiosity to see the real author. Curll, on my promise that, if I had a present, he should go snacks, sent me to her. I was admitted whilst her ladyship was shifting; and, on my admittance, Mrs. Abigail was ordered to withdraw. What passed between us, a point of gallantry obliges me to conceal; but, after some extraordinary civilities, I was dismissed with a purse of guineas, and a command to write a sequel to my tale. Upon this, I turned out smart in dress, bit Curll of his share, and ran out most of my money in printing my works at my own cost. But some years after the varlet was revenged. He arrested me for several mouths' board, brought me back to my garret,

and made me drudge on in my old dirty work. It was in his service that I wrote obscenity and profaneness under the names of Pope and Swift. Sometimes I was Mr. Gay, and at others Theory Burnet, or Addison. I abridged histories and travels, translated from the French what they never wrote, and was expert at finding out new titles for old books.

'When a notorious thief was hanged, I was the Plutarch to preserve his memory; and when a great man died, mine were his remains, and mine the account of his last will and testament . . . One of my books had the honour of being presented for a libel by the grand jury, and another was made a burnt-offering by the hands of the common hangman. If an author writes a piece that has success in his own character, I abuse him; but, if in a fictitious one, I endeavour to personate him, and write a second part to his work . . . Rather than stand out of the play, I have penned panegyricks on Rich's pantomimes, and I am always listed by him to hiss the first night at any of the Drury Lane performances.

'I have an excellent knack at birthday odes, elegies, acrosticks, anagrams, prologues, recommendatory poems, rhymes for almanack-makers, and witty distiches for the signs of country inns and ale-houses. When a man of quality is distinguished for a wit, or an encourager of it, I endeavour to strike him for a dedication. I have tried all means but what folks call honest ones for a livelihood. I offered my service for a secret spy to the state, but had not credit enough even for that. When it was indeed very low with me, I printed proposals for a subscription to my works, received money, and gave receipts without any intention of delivering the book . . . In short, I am a perfect town author; I hate all

mankind, yet am occasionally a mighty patriot. I am very poor, and owe my poverty to my merits; that is, to my writings. I am as proud as I am poor; yet, what is seemingly a contradiction, I never stick at a mean action when my own interest is concerned. It is reckoned a villainous action to write a libel, but more so to father one on a person who neither wrote it nor approves of it; now I own I never scruple to do both. When a man of figure, perhaps an ornament to his country, hath been cruelly aspersed in his lifetime, I love to revive the aspersion at his death . . . Now, gentlemen, if you like me for a correspondent, my price is the price of a journalist, a crown. You may find me in the morning at my lucubrations over a quartern pot in a Geneva shop in Clare Market. I generally dine with a brother-bard at one of the little cook's shops near St. Martin's Church, and probably spend the evening with him at a night cellar in the Strand, where I shall be ready to enter into a treaty with you.'

The whole tribe of Grub Street scribblers were incensed by the pamphlet, and great was their rejoicing when presently its author fell from his high estate; or, in other words, quarrelled with my Lord Tyrconnel, and was once more cast adrift upon the world. He had known hunger, and had been clad in rags, and he could not therefore bear with equanimity the fortune which had suddenly promoted him to fare sumptuously and dress in purple and fine linen. The reaction had been too great, and he soon learned to abuse the privileges extended to him. It was his habit, Lord Tyrconnel alleged, to enter a tavern with various companies, and drink the rarest wines with great profusion, he not

having a penny in his pocket to pay the reckoning withal. If his companions were willing to defray the cost, the matter ended peaceably; but if they became refractory, and demanded that he should pay for his own liquor, his method of settlement was to take them to his own apartments in my lord's mansion, assume the government of the house, imperiously order the butler to set the best wines in the cellar before his guests, who drank 'till they forgot the respect due to the house in which they were entertained, indulged themselves in the utmost extravagance of merriment, practised the most licentious frolicks, and committed all the outrages of drunkenness.'

Moreover, Lord Tyrconnel avowed that, having allowed Savage the use of a valuable collection of books, stamped with his own arms, he had the mortification to see them in a short time upon the stalls; it being one of the poet's ways to pawn the volumes when he wanted the accommodation of a small sum. Johnson said that whoever was acquainted with Mr. Savage easily credited both these accusations; 'for, having been obliged from his first entrance into the world to subsist upon expedients, affluence was not able to exalt him above them; and so much was he delighted with wine and conversation, and so long had he been accustomed to live by chance, that he would at any time go to the tavern without scruple, and trust for the reckoning to the liberality of his company, and frequently of company to whom he was very little known.'

Savage, in giving his reasons for the dispute with his patron, states that 'Lord Tyrconnel had involved his estate, and therefore poorly sought an occasion to quarrel with him.' Moreover, he said his lordship had

taken the liberty of exhorting him to regulate his method of life, had protested against his spending his nights in taverns, and requested that he would pass those hours with him which he so freely bestowed upon others. Liberty is dear to a Bohemian, and Savage resented this interference with it; he loftily declared he 'would spurn that friend who should presume to dictate to him.' He added that his maintenance and allowance was not so much a favour as a debt, as it was offered him upon conditions which he had never broken. However, the result of the quarrel was that the old life of wretchedness and want lay once more before him.

When Ensden, the parson poet laureate died, Savage exerted all the interest he possessed to gain the vacant office. To succeed such a rhymester as Ensden would in itself have been no honour. The pieces written on particular occasions by him had but brought him ridicule from the town in general, and merciless satire from such pens as those of Pope, Oldmixon, the Duke of Buckingham, and Savage. However, the vast merit which Lord Halifax beheld in the translation which Ensden made into Latin verse of his lordship's poem, the 'Battle of the Boyne,' had secured him that nobleman's patronage, and eventually gained him the laureateship from George the First; who probably never read a line of verse in his life. Savage, in satirizing this reverend and poetic personage, gives a strange picture of him. 'Methinks Laurus had better been an university vintner than a divine or a poet,' he writes. 'Would not bad wine have been easier put off than bad poetry? Had not a bunch of grapes flourished more naturally on his brow than a sprig of bays? Had he not with more propriety been seen sitting astride a

butt, with a bottle in one hand and a bumper in the other, roaring out a merry catch, than mounting, after the first stave, to thump a pulpit cushion, and pause at every half-sentence with a hiccup?'

Now that the laureate had gone to enjoy the music of the spheres, Savage sought his place; which was, however, given to Colley Cibber, whose verses were scarcely less inferior to those of his predecessor. But, notwithstanding his disappointment, Savage addressed an ode to the queen, signing himself the Volunteer Laureate. Having written the poem, he had no friend at court to present it, and the verses, therefore, made their appearance in pamphlet form. No sooner, however, had Her Majesty heard of them than she despatched a messenger to the bookseller for a copy, and, though the usual ceremony of presentation was wanting, she was obliging enough to send him a bank bill for fifty pounds, accompanied by a gracious message that she was highly pleased with the verses, that he had permission to write annually on the same subject, and that he should yearly receive the same present.

He therefore continued to style himself the Voluntary Laureate, much to the disgust of Colley Cibber, who took an opportunity of informing him that 'the title of laureate was a mark of honour conferred by the king, from whom all honour is derived, and which, therefore, no man has a right to bestow upon himself, and that he might with equal propriety style himself a volunteer lord or a volunteer baronet.' Savage, however, did not consider any title which was conferred upon Colley Cibber so honourable as that the usurpation of it could be imputed to him as an instance of very exorbitant vanity. He therefore continued to write under the

same title, and to receive the promised reward. This sum was by no means equal to his notions of luxury, and, with the reckless improvidence of his character, it was quickly spent. Whilst it lasted, he feasted sumptuously at taverns, drank rich wines, kept gay company; and then, when his last guinea had rattled on a tavern table, or passed into the possession of a woman of the town, he faced the future without the certainty of a meal or a lodging.

Johnson gives us a very graphic etching—most worthy of remembrance—of the poet's life at this time. 'For some part of the year,' he writes, 'Savage generally lived by chance; eating only when he was invited to the tables of his acquaintances, from which the meanness of his dress often excluded him, when the politeness and variety of his conversation would have been thought a sufficient recompense for his entertainment. He lodged as much by accident as he dined, and passed the night sometimes in mean houses which are set open at night to any casual wanderers, sometimes in cellars among the riot and filth of the meanest and most profligate of the rabble, and sometimes, when he had not money to support even the expenses of these receptacles, walked about the streets till he was weary, and lay down, in the summer, on a bulk, or in the winter, with his associates in poverty, among the ashes of a glass-house.

'In this manner were passed those days and those nights which nature had enabled him to have employed in elevated speculations, useful studies, or pleasing conversation. On a bulk, in a cellar, or in a glass-house, among thieves and beggars, was to be found the author of "The Wanderer": the man of exalted sentiments.

extensive views, and curious observations; the man whose remarks on life might have assisted the statesman, whose ideas of virtue might have enlightened the moralist, whose eloquence might have influenced senates, and whose delicacy might have polished courts.'

On the death of the queen the sum he was in the habit of receiving from her as voluntary laureate ceased, and he was now poorer than ever. His distress being, however, publicly known, his friends held counsel together that they might concert some means of helping him. The result was a proposal to raise by subscription a sum of fifty pounds a year, on which he should retire into Wales, where he could live in a private and economical manner without, as they agreed, 'aspiring to influence, but at the same time without any dependence on those little creatures which we are pleased to call the great.' This offer the poor poet, now in the lowest state of distress, gladly accepted, and looked forward with pleasure to residing in the country; of which it may be remarked he had not the slightest knowledge, except such as he had gathered from pastorals and other songs descriptive of rural delights. To the man whose days have been passed between the garret and the tavern, the land lying outside the city gates was an arcadian scene of flowery meads, watered by silver streams, dotted by flower-covered cottages; where innocent pleasures obtained, where nightingales perpetually sang, where sorrow and sin, toil and trouble were unknown. A poet's heart beat in his breast; a poet's imagination tinted his future with hues of the rose.

Full of hope, he therefore bade adieu to London town; having fifteen guineas in his pocket, which it

was intended should pay his way to Swansea, and support him there for some time. But fourteen days after his departure, he wrote to his friends that he was yet upon the road, and that, not having a penny in his purse, he could proceed no further. A remittance was therefore sent him, and he reached Swansea, feeling sadly disappointed with the country, miserably dissatisfied with his lot, and full of indignation with those who, he said, had banished him from town. These feelings he took care to express forcibly in the letters he addressed to his friends; the result being that several of them refused to further subscribe towards his support. After about a year's residence in Swansea, he set out for London; but reaching Bristol on his way, tarried there, where he was received with generous kindness, until such time as his conduct wearied his new friends. Here his life became a sequel to what it had been in London: he contracted debts at taverns, was pursued by bailiffs, starved, was cast into prison, and ended his most miserable life on the last day of July in the year 1743.

CHAPTER XIV.

Goldsmith in London—Physician, Usher, and Hack-Writer—The 'Monthly Review'—In Green Court Arbour—Beginning the World at Thirty-One—Letters to His Friends in Ireland—The Great City by Night—Johnson's Garret—Drinking Tea with Mrs. Williams—The Black Boy—The Philosopher's Appearance—Visiting with Mr. Joshua Reynolds—The Great Mr. Richardson—An Evening Walk with the Sage.

MORE than ten years later, another man of genius, who was destined to become one of the most polished writers of the age, one of the most delightful poets of his century, might be seen pushing his sad, slow way through the crowded, friendless streets of London. This was the simple-minded, tender-hearted Oliver Goldsmith. He had landed in Dover from his foreign travels in February, 1756, and for twelve weary days had journeyed to London, footsore and sick of heart; now acting in a barn with some strolling players, and again begging employment from an apothecary, that he might not starve before reaching the great city, which was to be the scene of his future keen privations, sordid humiliations, brief triumphs, and premature death.

Penniless and almost hopeless, he, on his arrival, herded by night among the beggars in Axe Lane, and by day wandered from one druggist's shop to another, humbly asking them to let him pound their mortars, spread their ointment, and run of their messages; but 'his threadbare coat,' says Percy, 'his uncouth figure, and his Hibernian dialect caused him to meet with repeated refusals.' At last there came a day when one Jacob, living at the corner of Monument Yard in Fish Street Hill, a man who had more compassion in his heart than those to whom poor Goldsmith had previously

applied, gave him employment, and he rose from being an apothecary's drudge to become a 'physician in a humble way.' As such he might be seen going his round in the poor districts of the town, clad in a suit of green velvet and gold, well worn and tarnished in the previous service of some more fortunate master; in which array he was encountered by his old schoolfellow Beatty, whom, in the face of all appearances, he assured that he was practising physic and doing very well indeed. Presently this faded finery was exchanged for a more sober suit of black velvet, which was, alas! neither new nor perfect; for on the left breast was a considerable patch, which it was the poor physician's greatest anxiety to keep covered with his hat whilst attending his humble patients, declining their polite efforts to relieve him of its care. 'But this constant position,' says Prior, who tells the story, 'becoming noticed, and the cause being soon known, occasioned no little merriment at his expense.'

Now it happened that amongst his patients was a workman in the employment of Samuel Richardson, the admired author, and, what was more to the purpose, the eminent publisher, who, noting the physician's neediness, and suspecting his hunger, ventured to hint that, as his master was ever ready to do a kind turn to men of parts, he might be of help to Mr. Goldsmith. The mention of the printer's name stirred the physician's heart; for already he had dreams of becoming an author, and had indeed written a great tragedy, of which the world was never destined to hear. An introduction was therefore speedily established by this humble means between the starving physician and the prosperous publisher, who gave him employment as corrector for his press. More-

over, he gradually admitted him to his familiar intercourse, and introduced him to his friends, one of whom was Dr. Young, the esteemed author of 'Night Thoughts.'

This was indeed a great help to poor Goldsmith, who was now enabled to carry on his work as corrector for the press at the same time that he practised physic; an employment which had barely prevented starvation, and in which he beheld no chance of improvement. For Goldsmith's manner lacked the polish and his person the air of prosperity which are essential commendations in physicians to the rich; moreover, his honesty, as Prior significantly remarks, 'despised that intrigue which some of his brethren find a convenient substitute for talent.' So few and small indeed were his fees that he soon abandoned such poor practice as was his for an ushership at a school kept by a dissenting minister, one Dr. Milner, which was obtained for him by that gentleman's son. Here he underwent the drudgery, then even more than now inseparable to such an occupation, with a brave spirit and a cheerfulness of disposition which made him alike the delight of his pupils and the friend of his employers. His salary was small indeed, and was mostly drawn in advance, in order that it might be spent in giving charity to beggars, or in buying fruits and sweetmeats for the boys; so that when quarter-day came round he had but little to receive, and this little went with alarming rapidity.

'Had you not better,' said Mrs. Milner to him one day, 'let me keep your money for you as I do for some of the young gentlemen?'

'In truth, madam,' replied the simple-hearted usher, 'there is equal need.'

It was at Dr. Milner's table that he became acquainted

with personages whose very names were spoken by Grub Street authors with bated breath. These were Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths, who kept a book shop at the sign of 'The Dunciad' in Paternoster Row. Griffiths was not only a bookseller, but was likewise a printer, and the projector and proprietor of the *Monthly Review;* and in his various avocations was aided by his spouse, a lady of literary tastes. The worthy pair have been charmingly described by an irreverent pen in Smollett's *Critical Review,* probably indeed by that ingenious author, the one as 'an illiterate bookseller,' and the other as 'an antiquated Sappho, a Sibyl, or rather a Pope Joan in taste and literature, pregnant with abuse begot by rancour under the canopy of ignorance.' Now Goldsmith, who had found time during the intervals of his hard toil to produce manuscripts which were wont to fill the pockets of his rusty velvet suit until his ungainly figure looked ridiculous, saw in the worthy bookseller and his wife beings who, if they were illiterate, yet had the fateful power of enabling him to fulfil his long-cherished desire of becoming an author. So, when the discourse at Dr. Milner's table turned on literature, Goldsmith took much pains to show he was well qualified to pronounce an opinion upon such matters. Griffiths in return paid him attention, and, being acquainted with his tastes and former employment with Samuel Richardson, engaged him as a regular writer for his *Monthly Review.*

The terms which he was to receive for working six hours daily were his board and lodging, and an 'adequate salary.' What pittance the humble usher considered adequate is not known. His life, however, was not all that he had expected; it was, indeed, but drudgery in

a new form. Not only were such articles, essays, and reviews—as he wrote invariably for six hours a day, and occasionally for double that time—penned at the dictation of Griffiths; but suggestions, corrections, and alterations were made by Mrs. Griffiths. Moreover, he was accused by the illiterate bookseller of affecting independence, no doubt a serious offence in the eyes of one whose word was law to the hacks he employed; and he was subjected in the domestic arrangements to many privations by the antiquated Sappho, 'a woman, says De Quincey, 'who would have broken the back of a camel, which must be supposed tougher than the heart of an usher.'

His connection with them, therefore, did not last long. At the end of about five months, he parted from them with mutual dissatisfaction; and the poor drudge found himself free once more, and happy in his freedom, though it was attained at the cost of probable starvation. He was, therefore, again upon the streets, struggling for bread by day, lying heaven knows where by night; making hard shifts to live—for to live was now his sole ambition. Then, when starvation dogged him through the friendless streets, he turned to Dr. Milner's school once more, and sought refuge in the drudgery of an ushership.

But after his brief experience as an author, the life of an usher seems to have become doubly irksome to him, and he soon left Dr. Milner's academy, and towards the end of 1758 took a lodging in Green Arbour Court, in the Old Bailey, when he set to work upon 'An Inquiry into the present State of Polite Literature in Europe,' a work he fondly trusted would bring him both money and reputation. This lodging was a single

room in a garret; uncomfortable, miserably poor, nay, 'wretchedly dirty,' according to the statement of a friend of his, the Rev. Thomas Percy.

This gentleman, who afterwards became Lord Bishop of Dromore, but who is now better remembered as the ingenious author of the 'Reliques,' had been introduced to Goldsmith at the 'Temple Exchange Coffee House.' Being one who loved letters greatly, and relished the society of those who pertained to the profession of literature, he was vastly pleased with Goldsmith's conversation, which, beneath the clearness of its simplicity, showed sparkling gems of thought and precious ore of fancies. So delighted was he with the poor writer that, soon after their first meeting, he must wait on him in his garret, which he found so wretched; a circumstance, he avows, he would not think of mentioning, did he not consider it the highest proof of Goldsmith's genius and talents, that by 'the bare exertion of their powers, under every disadvantage of person and fortune, he could gradually emerge from such obscurity to the enjoyment of all the comforts, and even luxuries, of life, and admission into the best societies in London. There was but one chair,' says Mr. Percy, 'and when he, from civility, offered it to his visitant, he himself was obliged to sit in the window. Whilst conversing, some one gently rapped at the door, and being desired to come in, a poor, ragged little girl of very decent behaviour entered, who, dropping a courtesy, said, "My mamma sends her compliments, and begs the favour of you to lend her a chamber-pot full of coals."'

But it was long before Goldsmith was to enjoy the society of the polite and learned; and, meanwhile, here he was, as he writes to 'Robert Bryanton, Esquire, at

Ballymahon, Ireland,' 'in a garret, writing for bread, and expecting to be dunned for a milk score.' This letter, and others penned in this lodging, he headed 'Temple Exchange Coffee House, where answers may be directed;' being anxious to withhold the name of the humble abode which sheltered him from the knowledge of those whom he addressed. Though the general tone of these epistles is cheerful, and even occasionally indulges in hopeful fancies for the future, yet here and there are touches which reveal the hard condition of the poor hack in vivid colours.

'I must confess, it gives me some pain,' he writes to his brother, the Rev. Henry Goldsmith, 'to think I am almost beginning the world at the age of thirty-one. Though I never had a day's sickness since I saw you, yet I am not that strong, active man you once knew me. You scarcely can conceive how much eight years of disappointment, anguish, and study have worn me down. If I remember right, you are seven or eight years older than me, yet I dare venture to say, if a stranger saw us both, he would pay me the honours of seniority. Imagine to yourself a pale, melancholy visage, with two great wrinkles between the eyebrows, with an eye disgustingly severe, and a big wig, and you may have a perfect picture of my present appearance.' Then he goes on to paint the contrast which he imagines exists between them. 'On the other hand,' he says, 'I conceive you as perfectly sleek and healthy, passing many a happy day among your own children, or those who knew you as a child. Since I knew what it is to be a man, this is a pleasure I have not known. I have passed my days among a parcel of cool, designing beings, and have contracted all their suspicious manner in my

own behaviour. I should actually be as unfit for the society of my friends at home, as I detest that which I am obliged to partake of here. I can now neither partake of the pleasure of a revel, nor contribute to raise its jollity. I can neither laugh nor drink, have contracted an hesitating, disagreeable manner of speaking, and a visage that looks ill-nature itself; in short, I have thought myself into a settled melancholy, and an utter disgust of all life brings with it.'

One cannot but smile at the idea of simple-hearted, trusting Oliver Goldsmith becoming suspicious in his manner. In another letter which he wrote to Mrs. Jane Lawder at this time he lays bare more than a corner of his foolish, tender heart. He apologizes for not having lately written to her because he was in such circumstances that all his endeavours to retain her regard might be attributed to wrong motives. He fears his letters might have been looked upon as the petitions of a beggar, instead of the offerings of a friend; whilst his professions, instead of being considered as the result of disinterested esteem, might be ascribed to venal insincerity. No doubt Mrs. Jane Lawder had too much generosity to place them in such a light, but he could not bear even the shadow of a suspicion. The most delicate friendships, he reminds her, are always most sensible of the slightest invasion; and the strongest jealousy is ever attendant on the warmest regard. He could not, therefore, continue a correspondence, for every acknowledgment for past favours might be considered as an indirect request for future ones.

'It is true,' he continues, in this charming letter, 'this conduct might have been simple enough, but

yourself must confess it was in character. Those who know me at all know that I have always been actuated by different principles from the rest of mankind, and while none regarded the interest of his friend more, no man on earth regarded his own less. I have often affected bluntness to avoid the imputation of flattery, have frequently seemed to overlook those merits too obvious to escape notice, and pretended disregard to those instances of good nature and good sense which I could not fail tacitly to applaud; and all this lest I should be ranked amongst the grinning tribe, who say "Very true" to all that is said; who fill a vacant chair at a tea-table; whose narrow souls never moved in a wider circle than the circumference of a guinea; and who had rather be reckoning the money in your pocket than the virtue of your breast. All this I say I have done, and a thousand other very silly though very disinterested things in my time, and for all which no soul cares a farthing about me. God's curse, madam! is it to be wondered that he should once in his life forget you, who has been all his life forgetting himself?

'However,' he says, playfully, 'it is probable that you may one of those days see me turned into a perfect hunks, and as dark and intricate as a mouse-hole. I have already given my landlady orders for an entire reform in the state of my finances. I declaim against hot suppers, drink less sugar in my tea, and check my grate with brickbats. Instead of hanging my room with pictures, I intend to adorn it with maxims of frugality. Those will make pretty furniture enough, and won't be a bit too expensive; for I shall draw them all out with my own hands, and my landlady's daughter shall frame them with the parings of my

black waistcoat. Each maxim is to be inscribed on a sheet of clean paper, and wrote with my best pen; of which the following will serve as a specimen: "Look sharp;" "Mind the main chance;" "If you have a thousand pounds you can put your hands by your sides and say you are worth a thousand pounds every day of the year;" "Take a farthing from a hundred and it will be a hundred no longer." Thus, which way soever I turn my eyes, they are sure to meet one of those friendly monitors; and, as we are told of an actor who hung his room round with looking-glass to correct the defects of his person, my apartment shall be furnished in a peculiar manner to correct the errors of my mind.

'Faith, madam,' he concludes, 'I heartily wish to be rich, if it were only for this reason, to say without a blush how much I esteem you; but, alas! I have many a fatigue to encounter before that happy time comes when your poor old simple friend may again give a loose to the luxuriance of his nature, sitting by Kilmore fireside, recount the various adventures of a hard-fought life, laugh over the follies of the day, join his flute to your harpsichord, and forget that ever he starved in those streets where Butler and Otway starved before him.'

Meanwhile he patiently endured 'the meannesses which poverty unavoidably brings with it,' and worked hard; translating French works for the booksellers, writing essays for the magazines, and executing such odd literary jobs as came in his way. At one time he thinks that at last fortune is beginning to look more kindly on him, and again the fickle jade but frowns upon his endeavours. To a sensitive nature such as his the merest trifle served to imbue him to-day with

the sunlight of hope, or wrap him to-morrow in the gloom of despair. But two brief months after his declaration that fortune was looking kindlier upon him, he writes to Griffiths, who had lent him clothes, which in great necessity he had pawned—begging that he might be sent to gaol, 'as a favour that may prevent something more fatal. I have been,' he cries out, when at last he is goaded by misery and despondency to make complaint, 'some years struggling with a wretched being—with all that contempt which indigence brings with it—with all those strong passions which make contempt insupportable? What then has a gaol that is formidable? I shall at least have the society of wretches, and such is, to me, true society.'

'Had I been a sharper,' he continues, with a bitterness wrung from his heart, 'had I been possessed of less good-nature and native generosity, I might surely now have been in better circumstances. I am guilty, I own, of meannesses which poverty unavoidably brings with it; my reflections are filled with repentance for my imprudence, but not with any remorse for being a villain—that may be a character you unjustly charge me with. It is very possible both the reports you have heard and your own suggestions may have brought you false information with respect to my character; it is very possible that the man whom you now regard with detestation may inwardly burn with grateful resentment; it is very possible that upon a second perusal of the letter I sent you, you may see the workings of a mind strongly agitated with gratitude and jealousy. If such circumstances should appear, at least spare invective till my book with Mr. Dodsley shall be published, and then perhaps you may see the

bright side of a mind, when my profession shall not appear the dictates of necessity, but of choice.'

At this time he felt indeed the full misery of his unhappy lot, and now and then words of self-commiseration, bubbling to the surface of his correspondence, would tell of the deep pain which beset his mind. When the Rev. Henry Goldsmith in Ireland is solicitous about the education of his son, and consults as to his future with Oliver, the latter replies that he must be taught thrift and economy; for frugality and even avarice are true ambition, they affording the only ladder for the poor to rise to preferment. 'Let his poor uncle's example be placed before his eyes,' he continues. 'I had learned from books to be disinterested and generous before I was taught from experience the necessity of being prudent. I had contracted the habits and notions of a philosopher, while I was exposing myself to the insidious approaches of cunning; and often by being, even with my narrow finances, charitable to excess, I forgot the rules of justice, and placed myself in the very situation of the wretch who thanked me for my bounty. Tell him this, and perhaps he may improve upon my example.'

Griffiths spared him the humiliation of sending him to gaol, and he was left in the undisturbed possession of that close garret chamber which was so little indebted to the attentions of the housemaid. Here it was his habit to work steadily through the day, seated at a little window which commanded a view of innumerable chimneys and roofs of thickly crowded houses. Occasionally, in order to vary the monotony of his labours, he would assemble the children of Green Arbour Court in his poor chamber, and taking up the flute, which had ever

been his resource from painful thoughts and sad, induce them to dance to its music. Then at night, locking up his door, he descended from his attic, and wandered through the lonely streets, up and down which he had so often trudged hungry and hopeless. The result of one of these solitary night walks was the production of his 'City Night Piece,' perhaps the most realistic and pathetic essay he ever penned. It also serves to give us a vivid etching of the London streets by night. The opening paragraph is in itself a picture. 'The clock has struck two, the expiring taper rises and sinks in the socket, the watchman forgets the hour in slumber, the laborious and the happy are at rest, and nothing now wakes but guilt, revelry, and despair. . . . Let me no longer waste the page over the night of antiquity or the sallies of contemporary genius, but pursue the solitary walk where vanity, ever-changing, but a few hours past walked before me, when she kept up the pageant, and now, like a froward child, seems hushed with her own importunities. What gloom hangs all around! The dying lamp emits a yellow gleam, no sound is heard but of the chiming clock or the distant watch-dog. All the bustle of pride is forgotten, and this hour may well display the emptiness of human vanity.' Then he paints the deserted streets which but a little while ago were crowded, and in which those who now appear no longer wear their daily masks, nor attempt to hide their hardness nor their misery. 'But who,' he asks, 'are those who make the streets their couch, and find a short repose from wretchedness at the doors of the opulent? These are strangers, wanderers, and orphans, whose circumstances are too humble to expect redress, and their distresses too great

even for pity. Some are without the covering even of rags, and others emaciated with disease; the world seems to have disclaimed them; society turns its back upon their distress, and has given them up to nakedness and hunger. These poor, shivering females have once seen happier days, and been flattered into beauty. They have been prostituted to the gay, luxurious villain, and are now turned out to meet the severity of winter in the streets; perhaps now lying at the doors of their betrayers, they sue to wretches whose hearts are insensible to calamity, or debauchees who may curse, but will not relieve them.'

Early in 1759 his 'Enquiry' was published, from which time the severest part of his life-struggle ceased. He was now soon to leave Green Arbour Court, with its polluted atmosphere, crowded tenements, and squalid misery, for more comfortable quarters in Wine Office Court. And, though he was yet to shrink from the dreaded presence of the bailiff he had bidden farewell to hunger; though he was still to shed tears of vexation on the reception of one of his plays, his feet had left the pathway of despair for the certain road to fame.

About this time he met with Samuel Johnson, a man whose name had become familiar to the town as the compiler of a great dictionary, as a writer whose influence had begun to make itself felt, as one who, though in need of the patronage of the great, had openly dared to despise the favour of a lord. 'This was,' Goldsmith says, in speaking of his first encounter with the great man, 'a very grave personage, whom at some distance I took for one of the most reserved and even disagreeable figures I had seen; but as he approached his appearance improved; and when I could distinguish him thoroughly,

I perceived that, in spite of the severity of his brow, he had one of the most good-natured countenances that could be imagined.'

Johnson was, at the time they became acquainted, living in Gough Square, hard by Fleet Street, where he had written his dictionary, and where he was now preparing his edition of 'Shakespeare,' the subscriptions for which constituted the only means of his subsistence. His study, if it may be designated by such a name, was, according to Dr. Burney, situated in a poor garret, sparsely furnished with 'an old, crazy deal table,' a chair and a half; his sole library being represented by six Greek folios and some volumes of 'Shakespeare' at which he was working. Here the sage, clad in a suit of rusty brown, would, whilst balancing himself with considerable dexterity on a chair which could boast of but three legs and an arm, deliver himself of opinions on all things in heaven and on earth. The while he shook his great head in a tremulous manner, moved his body backwards and forwards with a swaying motion, rubbed his left knee with the palm of his hand, and in the intervals of articulation made various sounds with his mouth, 'as if ruminating, or what is called chewing the cud; sometimes giving a half-whistle, sometimes making his tongue play backwards and forwards from the roof of his mouth, as if clucking like a hen, and sometimes protruding it against his upper gums in front, as if pronouncing under his breath *too, too, too;* all this accompanied sometimes with a thoughtful look, but more frequently with a smile.'

Then if such visitors as he entertained in his study found favour in his sight, he would invite them to his apartments below, to drink tea with his friend and

companion Mrs. Anna Williams. This pale, shrunken, blind old lady, the daughter of a late ingenious Welsh physician, was a woman of some literary ability, inasmuch as she had a knowledge of the French and Italian languages, translated the Life of the Emperor Julian, and wrote verses; moreover, she was a remarkable conversationalist, and possessed vast powers of entertainment. She had been a friend of Mrs. Johnson some time before the death of that lady, and, when she lost her sight through cataract, Johnson out of the charity of his great heart made her the partner of his dwelling. Not only was her mind well informed, and her manner sprightly, but her appearance was genteel, and must have brightened up the otherwise solitary lodgings of the great man, who, notwithstanding the resources of his mind, was ever unwilling to be left alone.* Miss Hawkins, in her interesting 'Memoirs,' speaks of Mrs. Williams as 'an old lady, dressed in scarlet, made in handsome French fashion, with a lace cap, with two stiffened projecting wings on the temples, and a black lace hood over it.'

So attired, she would sit at a little table in Johnson's rooms, making tea for such friends as he carried with him from Dodsley's or Newberry's shop, or the 'Bedford' or 'Turk's Head Coffee-House.' Johnson was an inveterate, or, as he describes himself, 'a hardened and shameless tea drinker, who has for many years diluted his meals with only the infusion of this fascinating plant; whose kettle has scarcely time to cool, who with tea amuses the evening, with tea solaces the midnights, and with tea welcomes the morning.'† Never was he

* Sir Joshua Reynolds wrote of Johnson th[illegible] The great business of his life (he said) was to escape from himself.'

† Northcote, in his life of Reynolds, says that 'Johnson's extra-

in such excellent humour with himself and the world at large than when drinking cup after cup of this beverage at Mrs. Williams' table. Notwithstanding her blindness, the old lady brewed tea with considerable dexterity; though, adds one who sat at her board, 'her manner of satisfying herself that the cups were full enough appeared a little awkward, for she put her finger down a certain way till she felt the tea touch it.' *

Gathered round Mrs. Williams' tea-table we find a right pleasant company, such as Goldsmith, who entertained a high opinion of his hostess; Dr. Burney, the musician; Shiels, the poor poet; Mr. Diamond, the apothecary from Cork Street, Burlington Gardens, with whom Mrs. Williams dined every Sunday; Mrs. Masters, the poetess 'who lived with Mr. Cave;' David Garrick and Peg Woffington; Mr. Bennet Langton, a young gentleman with a 'mild countenance, elegant features, and a sweet smile,' who hailed from Trinity College, Oxford; Mr. Topham Beauclerk, a beau of the first distinction, a conversationalist of the choicest wit, whom Johnson loved; Mrs. Gardiner, a worthy woman, wife

ordinary or rather extravagant fondness for this refreshment did not fail to excite notice wherever he went;' and it is related that whilst on his Scottish tour, and spending some time at Dunvegan, the castle of the chief of the Macleods, the Dowager Lady Macleod, having repeatedly helped him until she had poured out sixteen cups, then asked him if a small basin would not save him trouble, and be more agreeable? 'I wonder, madam,' answered he, roughly, 'why all the ladies ask me such questions! It is to save yourself trouble, madam, and not me.' The lady was silent, and resumed her task.

* In justice, it must be added that Percy says, 'When she made tea for Johnson and his friends, she conducted it with so much delicacy, by gently touching the outside of the cup, to feel, by the heat, the tea as it ascended within, that it was rather matter of admiration than of dislike.'

to a tallow-chandler in Snow Hill; Mr. Dodsley, the bookseller; Mr. Strahan, the printer; and young Mr. Reynolds, the painter, who had since 1752 fixed himself in handsome apartments in St. Martin's Lane. Johnson having refreshed himself with his favourite beverage, Mrs. Williams, knowing his ways, would lead the great man on to talk, whilst those around him listened with the utmost attention; putting a question here, or asserting an opinion there, for the purpose of eliciting further reflections on the discourse which occupied him; for his conversation, as Hogarth said, illustrating his speech by a simile savouring of his profession, was, to the talk of other men, like Titian's painting compared with Hudson's. Mrs. Williams, on these occasions, would likewise divert the company, having a most retentive memory, and loving gossip greatly. At such times her temper, which 'was marked by Welsh fire,' was placid, but at other periods of the day it was wont to be much exercised by the meaner inmates of the upper floors of Johnson's house, as well as by the black boy, Francis Barber, whom the sage kept, partly through charity, partly from love of his 'dear, dear Bathurst,' whose father had brought the negro to England. The black boy was supposed to act as body-servant to the philosopher; though, as Sir John Hawkins observes, 'the uses for which Francis was intended to serve Johnson were not very apparent, for Diogenes himself never wanted a servant less than he seemed to do. The great, bushy wig, which throughout his life he affected to wear, by that closeness of texture which it had contracted and had been suffered to retain, was ever nearly as impenetrable by a comb as a quickset hedge; and little of the dust that had once settled on

his outer garments was ever known to have been disturbed by the brush.'

Northcote states that he was so uncouth in his gait and action, and so slovenly in his dress, as to attract the attention of passengers who met him in the street. On one occasion an impertinent jackanapes whom he passed was so diverted by the philosopher's appearance that he commenced to imitate him in a most ludicrous manner. Johnson turned and saw him, and, being most sensitive to ridicule, was so greatly angered, that he at once determined on giving a practical proof of his feelings. Therefore, going up to the man, he said, 'You are a very weak fellow, and I will convince you of it,' on which he gave him a blow which sent the man out of the footpath into the dirty street flat on his back, when Johnson walked calmly on. His slovenliness indeed frequently brought him humiliation. Northcote also tells that one afternoon when Johnson, in company with Reynolds and his sister, went to visit the Miss Cotterells of Cavendish Street, who were neighbours of his, he was caused great pain by an unhappy mistake. Arriving at the door of the Miss Cotterells' house, the maid-servant, by accident, let them in, but did not know Johnson, though he had been a frequent visitor; he having always heretofore been admitted by the man-servant. 'Johnson was the last of the three visitors that came in; when the servant-maid, seeing this uncouth and dirty figure of a man, and not conceiving he could be one of the company who came to visit her mistresses, laid hold of his coat just as he was going up-stairs, and pulled him back again, saying,

'"You fellow, what is your business here? I suppose you intended to rob the house."

'This most unlucky accident threw poor Johnson into such a fit of shame and anger, that he roared out like a bull; for he could not immediately articulate, and was with difficulty at last able to utter, "What have I done? What have I done?" Nor could he recover himself for the remainder of the evening from this mortifying circumstance.' His sensitiveness to his appearance was such, that at least on one occasion it made him apprehensive of a slight where none was intended. Reynolds used to tell that when he and the great man were one afternoon calling on a gentlewoman who lived much in the fashionable world, the Duchess of Argyle and another lady of the first rank came in. Johnson, thinking that his hostess became too much engrossed with these fine friends, to the neglect of himself and Reynolds, of whom he fancied she was ashamed, grew angry. He therefore resolved to shock her supposed pride, by making the great visitors imagine he and the painter were low indeed; and addressing himself to Reynolds, in a loud voice, said, 'How much do you think you and I could get in a week, if we were *to work as hard as we could?*' the inference which he wished to have drawn being that they were common mechanics.

Johnson and Reynolds had become friends from the hour of their first introduction, which had taken place in the Miss Cotterells' drawing-room, by reason of an ingenious remark which the young painter made, to Johnson's prodigious satisfaction. The ladies, on this occasion, were deeply regretting the death of a friend to whom they owed vast obligations, upon which Reynolds observed, 'You have, however, the comfort of being relieved from the burden of gratitude.' The Miss

Cotterells professed themselves shocked at the suggestion, but Johnson, after his manner, stoutly defended it, and expressed himself pleased with the just view of human nature which Mr. Reynolds' remark exhibited. When the painter, after awhile, bowed himself out of the ladies' presence, Johnson jumped up, accompanied him to his rooms, and supped with him; and in this manner commenced that pleasant friendship which lasted for years, and ended but with death. The fact that the young painter had read and admired the author's 'Life of Savage' had no doubt made clear the way for their subsequent intimacy. Happening to meet the volume whilst in Devonshire, Reynolds opened and began to read it 'while he was standing, with his arm leaning against a chimney-piece. It seized his attention so strongly that, not being able to lay down the book until he had finished it, when he attempted to move, he found his arm totally benumbed.'

Reynolds, as became a young man of parts, had a vast admiration for distinguished writers, and especially for Samuel Richardson. Johnson, therefore, who at this time was well acquainted with this ingenious author—who, he says, 'has enlarged the knowledge of human nature, and taught the passions to move at the command of virtue'—promised to introduce the artist and his sister; and accordingly carried them down to the bookseller's shop, and made them known to the printer. On their way thither, Johnson hinted that, if they wanted to see Richardson in good humour, they must expatiate on the excellencies of his 'Clarissa.' This was what Johnson had done himself more than once, though no doubt his admiration was genuine, and had arisen not only from the merits of the author, but

from gratitude at having been released by him on one occasion from the sponging-house. 'Though the story is long,' he writes to Richardson, 'every letter is short.' (The story, it will be remembered, is told in a series of epistles.) Then he begs him to add an *index rerum* to the work 'for "Clarissa" is not a performance to be read with eagerness, and laid aside for ever, but will be occasionally consulted by the busy, the aged, and the studious.'*

Before we take leave of ingenious Samuel Johnson's pleasant company, let us saunter with him as he takes his evening walk, accompanied by Langton or Topham Beauclerk, in the long, narrow, paved court, overshadowed by trees, close by Holborn; where the noise of the human current close by falls with a placid murmur that soothes his troubled meditations. There were few who loved the great capital better than he. To him it was a place of residence, pre-eminent over every other; a great field of genius and exertion, where talents of every kind had their fullest scope and their highest encouragement; a very fountain of intelligence and pleasure. 'London is nothing to some people,' he said, 'but to a man whose pleasure is intellectual, London is the place. Nowhere else cured a man's vanity or arrogance so well as London; for as no man was either great or good *per se*, but as compared with others not so good or so great, he was sure to find in the metropolis many his equals, and some his superiors.'

* Mrs. Piozzi writes that Johnson, in speaking of Richardson, said, 'You think I love flattery—and so I do; but a little too much always disgusts me. That fellow Richardson, on the contrary, could not be content to sail quietly down the stream of reputation without longing to taste the froth from every stroke of the oar.

Then he would discourse pleasantly on its growing importance and increasing population. Fleet Street had a very animated appearance, yet the full tide of human existence was Charing Cross. 'But,' he said, 'if you wish to have a just notion of the magnitude of this city, you must not be satisfied with seeing its great streets and squares, but must survey the innumerable little lanes and courts. It is not in the showy evolutions of buildings, but in the multiplicity of human habitations which are crowded together that the wonderful immensity of London consists.'

Having enjoyed his walk in this shady court, he would take his slow way to the 'Temple Exchange Coffee-House,' or on a certain night in the week to the 'King's Head Tavern,' in Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row, founded by him sixteen years before the famous Literary Club. And, as he passes along, many a worthy citizen turns and stares at his burly figure; for, 'when he walked in the streets, what with the constant roll of his head, and the concomitant motion of his body, he appeared to make his way by that motion, independent of his feet.' Moving in this slow fashion, he suddenly pauses, and, in obedience to some superstitious habit, counts a certain number of steps from a certain point; then resumes his solemn march once more, avoiding to tread on the junction of the stones in the pavement, but carefully on the centre, and laying one hand on every stone post he passed. The club was formed for the purpose of literary discussion and general relaxation, and could boast such members as the Rev. Dr. Salter, Mr. John Payne, the bookseller, Mr. Samuel Dyer, described as a learned young man, Dr. M'Ghie, a Scotch physician, and Mr. John Hawkins, an attorney. Here

he resorted, with a disposition to please and be pleased making it a rule to talk his best; showing occasionally a versatility of temper at which none took offence, but generally contributing to the mirth of conversation 'by the many witty sayings he uttered, and the many excellent stories which his memory had treasured up and which he would on occasion relate.'

And so, whilst he is sitting at the club-room table, surrounded by the friends who loved his discourse, forgetful of his struggles in their genial society, enjoying the retort and the laughter which his wit has provoked shall we take our regretful leave of this most central figure in the great history of our literature.

CHAPTER XV.

Charles Macklin and his Tavern—The British Inquisition—Foote's most Excellent Wit—Macklin's Pupils—Foote as an Actor—The Diversions of the Morning—Drinking a Dish of Chocolate with the Wit—His Mimicry—Young Tate Wilkinson and Peg Woffington—Her Anger and Resentment—The Mimic Mimicked—Wilkinson, Foote, and Garrick—A Night at Drury Lane—The Mirror at Covent Garden—Rich, Foote, Garrick, and Wilkinson.

THE theatrical world and its ways during the last years of Peg Woffington's life afford an interesting, amusing, and not uninstructive study. Poor honest-hearted, whimsical Charles Macklin, whilst yet in the vigour of his life and fulness of his fame, resolved to retreat from the stage, before, as he said, 'the powers of acting were weakened by age and infirmity.' Accordingly, on the 20th of December, 1753, he took his farewell benefit at Covent Garden in 'The Refusal,' playing Sir Gilbert

Wrangle, Mrs. Macklin Lady Wrangle, and Miss Macklin, Charlotte, when the unbounded approbation of the audience, as Kirkman narrates, 'bear the most ample testimony of their satisfaction and the actor's merit, they regretting loudly and repeatedly the retirement of their old favourite.'

At the conclusion of the play he spoke a farewell epilogue, in which he compared himself to a sailor tossed from shore to shore, sick, wet, and weary, who had resolved to go to sea no more. 'Some other schemes, of course, possess my brain,' he said.

> 'A scheme I have in hand will make you stare,
> Though off the stage I still must be a player.'

He then commended his wife and daughter, who were yet to remain on the stage, to the favour of the audience; and having spoken his adieu, he bowed profoundly and retired, amidst the universal plaudits of his audience.

He had realized what was in those days considered a handsome fortune, the greater part of which he resolved to lay out in the execution of his scheme, already referred to—one indeed of many which perpetually beset him with as much persistence as the demons did the good St. Anthony in his desert loneliness—of establishing a tavern in the piazza of Covent Garden, to which was to be added what he was pleased to describe as 'a school of oratory, upon a plan hitherto unknown in England.' This school of oratory was to be called 'The British Inquisition.' As Charles Macklin was no commonplace man, the ordinary which was opened in March, 1745, was not, as may be supposed, conducted on principles like those which had heretofore regulated such mundane but necessary establishments. He commenced by furnishing his house in a superb manner,

and stocking his cellar with the choicest wines. He then hired a vast number of barmaids, cooks, waiters, and servants of all descriptions, whom he personally undertook to train in the way they should go; moreover, he drew up a plan destined to regulate his remarkable ordinary, the rules of which were strictly adhered to whilst it lasted.

Dinner was announced in the daily papers to be ready by four o'clock, and a quarter of an hour before that time each day the whole neighbourhood of Covent Garden was alarmed by the pealing of a great bell affixed to the top of the house, this being a further advertisement, a trifle sensational in its form, that Mr. Macklin's dinner was just about to commence, and that ladies and gentlemen might step in and secure their places. As the clock struck the hour, dinner was laid upon the table; the outer door was then shut, and no other customer was admitted to disturb those already present. Macklin, dressed in a full suit, with stockings rolled over his knees, long flaps to his waistcoat, enormous cuffs, tight stock, and no collar to his coat, brought in the first dish with a slow and stately step that savoured of Hamlet in search of his father's ghost. Then, making a low and gracious bow, that would have done honour to any theatrical potentate, he retired five paces in the direction of the sideboard. Here two of the principal waiters took their places beside him, and posed as ornamental figures during the meal. None of the servants were permitted to speak, save to answer as briefly as possible such questions as the guests addressed to them; and, in order to secure perfect uninterruption to the discourse at the table, Macklin's orders were conveyed by a series of signals, which he

had taught them for months previous to his opening this wonderfully regulated ordinary. When dinner was over, glasses and bottles were laid upon the table. Then Macklin gravely advanced five paces, bowed low to the company, and expressed his hopes that all things had been found agreeable. After this he passed the bell rope round the back of the chair of the person sitting at the head of the table, made another low bow, and with calm stately grace slowly withdrew. The price of this dinner, it may be noted, was three shillings, including port, claret, or such liquor as the customer should choose.

When the ordinary, the etiquette of which savoured so much of the proprietor's former calling, had been established eight months, the 'British Inquisition' was opened to the public. The institution, as the originator of the scheme set forth in a wonderfully amusing and most pretentious advertisement, 'is upon the plan of the ancient Greek, Roman, and modern French and Italian societies of liberal investigation. Such subjects in arts, sciences, literature, criticism, philosophy, history, politics, and morality, as shall be found useful and entertaining to society, will be there lectured upon and freely debated; particularly Mr. Macklin intends to lecture upon the comedy of the ancients, the use of their masks and flutes, their mimes and pantomimes, and the use and abuse of the stage. He will likewise lecture upon the rise and progress of the modern theatres, and make a comparison between them and those of Greece and Rome; and between each other; he proposes also to lecture upon each of Shakespeare's plays, to consider the original stories from whence they are taken, the artificial or inartificial use, according to

the laws of the drama, that Shakespeare has made of them; his fable, moral character, passions, manners will likewise be criticized, and how his capital characters have been acted heretofore, are acted, and ought to be acted. And as the design of this inquiry is to endeavour at an acquisition of truth in matters of taste, particularly theatrical, the lecture being ended, any gentleman may offer his thoughts upon the subject.

'The doors will open at five, and the lecture begin precisely at seven o'clock, every Monday and Friday evening.

'Ladies will be admitted, price one shilling each person.

'The first lecture will be on "Hamlet."

'N.B.—The question to be debated after the lecture will be whether the people of Great Britain have profited by their intercourse with, or their imitation of, the French nation.

'There is a public ordinary every day at four o'clock, price three shillings each person; to drink port, claret, or whatever liquor he shall choose.'

Inasmuch that Macklin knew nothing whatsoever of the Greek and Roman stages, or of the Greek and Latin languages, and very little of the French, and was entirely ignorant of the authors from whom Shakespeare drew his plots, which same facts were well known to the town at large, the British Inquisition was regarded from the first as nothing more nor less than a burlesque, which the wits, and men about town, and coffee-house idlers generally, attended for the purpose of diverting themselves. The burlesque was heightened by the grave airs and complacent egotism of the chief actor, and by the numerous asides and farcical comments

which frequently interrupted his discourses. Amongst those who made a point of attending the 'Inquisition' was Foote, whose inimitable wit found full play here, and who, by his quaint questions, his quick repartee, and the mock gravity of his remarks, threw the lecturer into a flutter of consternation, and the audience into a state of merriment throughout the evening.

Once during Macklin's dissertation on the Greek stage—taken bodily from Dryden's prefaces—the lecturer spoke of some Grecian customs, the origin of which were open to the dispute of the learned; at which point Foote stood up and said with a very solemn face, as he pointed to Macklin's cook,

'Sir, here is a man who has been several times all over grease (Greece)—let us consult him.'

'Why, sir,' replied the cook, quite innocently, 'you make a mistake; I have never been beyond Greenwich in all my life.'

'Nay, nay,' replied Foote, yet more solemnly, 'don't tell a fib, man; I have seen you myself at Spithead.'

At which Macklin, as well as the audience, laughed right heartily. Presently, when the lecturer had concluded, a group of friends gathered round him, and the conversation turned on Foote's joke about the cook, and from the cook to the waiters, when one of the pretty fellows complimented Macklin on his manner of directing them by signals.

'Ay, sir,' said Macklin quite triumphantly, 'I knew it would do. And where do you think I pitched upon this hint? I pitched upon it from no less a man than James, Duke of York, who you know, sir, first invented signals for the fleet.'

'Very *à propos* indeed,' said Foote, quietly, 'and good

poetical justice; as from the fleet they were taken—so to the Fleet both master and signals are likely to return.'

Another lecture of Macklin's at which the wit was present, was delivered on the causes of duelling in Ireland, and the reasons why the practice obtained in that nation more than in any other. Commencing at the earliest period of Irish history, and the customs and habits of the Irish people, Macklin slowly prosed down the stream of Hibernian characteristics until he arrived at the reign of Elizabeth, when Foote rose. Macklin stopped and, looking at him, said,

'Well, sir, what have you to say upon the subject?'

'Only to crave a little attention, sir,' says the wit, with great modesty, 'when I think I can settle this point in a few words.'

'Well, sir, go on,' cried Macklin, all attention.

'Why then, sir,' said Foote, 'what o'clock is it?'

'O'clock!' says the lecturer, taken aback. 'What has that to do with a dissertation on duelling?' And he drew himself up solemnly.

'Pray, sir,' says Foote, 'be pleased to answer my question, and you will speedily learn.'

Macklin, not without some uneasiness, pulled out his watch, and reported the hour to be half-past ten.

'Very well,' says Foote, thoughtfully, 'about this time of the night every gentleman in Ireland that can possibly afford it is on his third bottle of claret, consequently is in a fair way of getting drunk; from drunkenness proceeds quarrelling, and from quarrelling duelling, and so there's an end of the chapter.'

The company seemed so satisfied with this abridgment that Macklin walked off his platform, and said no more upon the subject. Indeed he soon began to

detest this man, who with such little seeming offence turned him into ridicule at pleasure; there was no escaping his ready answers, which were tempered with such humour that it was hard to resent them. One night, when Macklin was preparing his lecture, he saw his witty tormentor in a corner of the room, surrounded as usual by a group of laughing friends.

'Well, sir,' Macklin called out, in an authoritative voice, 'you seem to be very merry there; but do you know what I am going to say now?'

'No, sir,' says Foote. 'Pray *do you?*'

And the crowd laughed louder than before. At times the lecturer would boast of his descent from the kings of Munster, but declare at the same time that he was the first of his name.

'There was no other Macklin before me,' he would say, gravely, 'for I invented Macklin to get rid of that damned Irish name, McLoughlin.'

'But, sir, might not such a name exist without your knowing it?' said a grave dignitary of the Church to him one night.

'No, sir,' he answered, with gruff assurance.

'Why, now I think of it,' says the churchman, 'there was a printer towards the close of the sixteenth century, near Temple Bar, of that name,' and he appealed to a friend of his learned in black-letter lore, who declared he had seen several volumes with the name of Macklin at the bottom of the title-page.

'Well, Mr. Macklin, what do you say to that?' asks one of the company.

'Say, sir! Why, all I have to say is this,' he replied, stiffly, reluctant to admit he was wrong, 'that black-letter men [illegible]e like other men.'

Not satisfied with catering for the mental and physical appetites of the public, he undertook to instruct candidates for the stage, who were, after a few lessons, required to give specimens of their various talents for the benefit of the public, in the lecture-room, three times a week. If the wits were pleased with his lectures, they were in transports with these exhibitions; and the raciest stories regarding master and pupils flew about the coffee-houses and taverns. One of the aspirants for dramatic fame, 'twas said, whilst reciting Othello's speech before the Senate, was observed to constantly throw back his left arm with great violence. 'Pray, sir,' said his tutor, 'keep back your left arm a little more; you are now, consider, addressing the Senate, and the right hand is the one to give grace and energy to your enunciation.'

'Oh, sir,' says the dramatic pupil, 'it is only the sleeve of my coat, which I forgot to pin back; as I lost my left arm many years ago on board a man of war.'

Foote used to tell of another aspirant who applied to be instructed in the part of the *cock* in 'Hamlet'; and of a certain individual who wrote to Macklin that he had a great desire to play the parts of Shakespeare's heroines, for which he felt he had a vast amount of ability, that, with some instructions, would take the world by storm.

Delighted at having such a remarkable pupil, Macklin requested the favour of an interview with his correspondent, who turned out to be a blackamoor.

Not satisfied with ridiculing Macklin in his own rooms, Foote conceived the idea of burlesquing him for the greater diversion of the town. He had, years before, in 1744, made his *début* as an actor, to the

infinite disgust of his friends, who were outraged that a man of quality should become a player.

'What,' said my Lord Carteret to him, in vast surprise. 'What can possess you to go on the stage, and play the fool?'

'The same reason that actuates your lordship to play it off,' answered the wit, solemnly.

'Why, what can that be?' asked my lord, not quite seeing the point of the joke.

'Want,' replied Foote.

'Want!' repeated Lord Carteret.

'Yes, want of money makes me play the fool; and want of wit, your lordship.'

The noble earl in future kept his opinions regarding this new player to himself.

The character in which Foote selected to make his first appearance was that of Othello; a fact affording another proof of the frequency with which men mistake the direction whence their talents lie. His tragedy, though played in all seriousness, was pronounced a masterpiece of burlesque; but it proved inferior in its outrageous extravagance to his subsequent representation of the woe-stricken Hamlet; whilst his Shylock likewise diverted all the town, the more so as Kitty Clive played Portia. From tragedy he descended to comedy, and gradually found his level in grotesque mimicry. Accordingly, he in 1747 opened the little theatre in the Haymarket with a piece he had written for himself, called 'The Diversions of the Morning,' in which he daringly, and in the wittiest manner possible, mimicked the most prominent characters of the day: such as Sir Thomas de Veil, a Westminster justice, Cock, the celebrated engineer, Orator Hanley, and the actors and

actresses of both theatres. The players one and all grew furious at being made the laughing-stock of the town, and declared they would be ruined. But Foote was implacable, and made fresh fun from their grumblings. Since, he said, pleasantly enough, that was the case, it was his duty to provide a situation for each lady and gentleman so circumstanced; and that, instead of murdering blank verse, and assuming the characters of kings and queens, lords and ladies (for which their abilities were far from being suitable), he would place them where their talents and behaviour could with more propriety be employed.

He therefore, with inimitable wit, gave representations of them in their new occupations. Quin, with his sonorous voice and slow gait, he personated as a watchman, crying out 'Past twelve o'clock, and a cloudy morning;' Delane, who was supposed to have but one eye, was mimicked as a beggar man; Ryan, because of his shrill voice, as a razor-grinder, calling out 'Razors to grind, sissars to grind, penknives to grind,' and so on. Nay, even the great Garrick was not spared, for Foote, seizing on his habit of hesitation, imitated his dying sentence in the character of Lothario in a manner which convulsed a public, then, as now, more appreciative of the ridiculous than the sublime.

The actors were, however, soon to have their revenge. Along with 'The Diversions of the Morning,' which was merely an entertainment, Foote ventured to play some scenes from Congreve's 'Old Bachelor.' As the Haymarket was not licensed, this was illegal, and Lacey of Drury Lane made speedy application to the Lord Chamberlain to have the performances suppressed; the result of which was, a troop of constables entered

the playhouse one night, cleared out the audience, and shut the doors. Foote, however, being a man of resources and courage, was not cast down by this unceremonious treatment.

'He has wit,' said Johnson, 'and one species of wit in an eminent degree, that of escape. You drive him into a corner with both hands; but he's gone, sir, when you think you have got him—like an animal that jumps over your head. Then he has a great range for wit; he never lets truth stand between him and a jest, and he is sometimes mighty coarse.'

Accordingly, on this occasion he jumped over the heads of the authorities in a manner which delighted the town by its readiness. On the very morning following that on which the constables had visited his theatre, he inserted the following notice in the columns of the *General Advertiser*, which astonished and amused the public to a vast degree. 'On Saturday afternoon, exactly at twelve o'clock, at the new theatre in the Haymarket, Mr. Foote begs the favour of his friends to come and drink a dish of chocolate with him; and 'tis hoped there will be a great deal of comedy and some joyous spirits; he will endeavour to make the morning as diverting as possible. Tickets to be had for this entertainment at George's Coffee-House, Temple Bar, without which nobody will be admitted. N.B.—Sir Dilbury Diddle will be there, and Lady Betty Frisk has absolutely promised.'

This advertisement was read with delight in a hundred coffee-houses from St. James's to St. Paul's, and laughed over in as many drawing-rooms. The postscript seemed to promise fun to those who were sure of not being burlesqued, and the town was certain of being diverted.

Therefore, before twelve o'clock a most fashionable gathering, which included the Duke of Cumberland, awaited Mr. Foote's appearance in the Haymarket Theatre. The duke had met the wit in Covent Garden that morning, and told him he was going to drink a dish of chocolate with him at mid-day, when he expected some fun.

'You see,' said this stout scion of royalty, 'I always swallow your good things.'

'Do you?' said Foote, slyly. 'Why, then, I congratulate your Royal Highness on your digestion, for I believe you never threw one of them up in your lifetime.'

When the green curtain slowly rose on this memorable morning, Foote came briskly forward, bowed low, and, with a droll twinkle in his eye, said that he was just then preparing some young pupils for the stage, and, whilst chocolate was getting ready, he would, with the permission of his audience, proceed with his instructions. With this preface he began his tuition to imaginary pupils, and gave imitations of actors and others well known to the town, with a wit that was more caustic and unsparing than before. Few prominent persons whose characteristics afforded the slightest scope for mimicry escaped him; Dr. Barrowby, who prided himself on his judgment as a theatrical critic, Dr. Arne, whom he called Dr. Catgut, and Chevalier Taylor, the quack oculist, being especial b[illegible] for his mirth. For forty consecutive week days he [illegible] great crowds; never had any performance been [illegible] droll, never had audiences been so merry; for they laughed till the tears rolled down their cheeks. At the expiration of these forty days, it struck Foote that an imitation of Macklin, delivering his rodomontade with an

air of vast wisdom and gravity, would be certain to draw audiences afresh; he therefore gave a quaint and extravagant imitation of the actor, which had the result of filling his coffers to the extent of five hundred pounds, whilst it sent Macklin into the bankruptcy court.

So well were his caricatures received that he conceived the idea of writing plays to suit himself, the leading characters in which should be taken from real life, and exhibited under a veil of disguise so thin that the most short-sighted must perceive the original. The idea no sooner entered into his mind than it was acted upon, and a number of comedies ridiculing well-known men quickly succeeded each other. Perhaps the most successful of these was 'The Author,' produced in 1757, in which, under the name of Cadwallader, he mimicked Mr. Ap Rice, a Welsh gentleman familiar to the eyes of the town. Foote was a friend of Mr. Ap Rice, and had therefore constant opportunities of studying his portrait from the life.

On the first night of the production of this play, the Welsh gentleman was not only present, but, probably through the malicious contrivance of Foote, occupied a stage box, a position which, from its prominency, gave the audience an excellent chance of comparing the original with the caricature, stout of stomach, foolish of face, awkward of gait, and incoherent of speech. Never had the great mimic come so close to nature; a fact at once recognized by all present, save the victim! Yet none seemed to enjoy the fun more than he who was in complete ignorance of its cause. But Mr. Ap Rice was not long permitted to remain in that condition which has been described as bliss. Whilst waddling

his slow way through the streets, he was from this night forward stared and laughed at; whilst, when he entered a coffee-house or tavern, his ears were surprised by the whisper, 'There's Cadwallader, there's Cadwallader.' Even to this most obtuse Welsh gentleman, it became unendurable; a light suddenly broke in upon his brain; and he sought and obtained protection from the Lord Chamberlain, who properly issued an order for the suppression of the play.

Mimicry, indeed, became highly fashionable about this time, and as there is ever a supply ready for a demand in the world of art, so there sprang to the surface of theatrical life in those days a remarkable and highly ingenious youth, who surpassed even Foote himself as a mimic. This was Tate Wilkinson, the son of Dr. Wilkinson, Chaplain to the Prince of Wales, and likewise of the Savoy Chapel. Soon after the passing of the Marriage Act, Dr. Wilkinson was, partly through the instrumentality of David Garrick, tried, and sentenced to transportation, for celebrating marriages in the Savoy in defiance of the law. Before the sentence could, however, be carried out, Dr. Wilkinson died, leaving a widow and an only son, Tate. The young gentleman had great powers as a mimic, and burned with a desire of becoming a player. Now, the first step necessary to attain this end, was an introduction to the great actor-manager of Drury Lane. Accordingly, through the kindness of a friend, he obtained a letter from Lord Mansfield to David Garrick. Duly armed with this epistle, he walked several times up and down Southampton Street, where the famous actor then resided, before he could summon courage to rap at the door of his dwelling, fearing instant admission might

follow,' he writes, 'or, what appeared to me almost as dreadful, if graciously admitted, how I should be able to walk, move, or speak before him.' At last he rapped, ascertained that the great man was at home, delivered his letter, and, after a delay of ten minutes, ushered into his presence.

'Mr. Garrick,' Wilkinson writes, 'glanced his scrutinizing eye first at me, then at the letter, and so alternately. At last—"Well, sir—hey?—what, now you are a stage candidate? Well, sir, let me have a taste of your quality." I, distilled almost to jelly with my fear, attempted a speech from Richard, another from Essex; which he encouraged by observing I was so much frightened, that he could not form any judgment of my abilities, but assured me it was not a bad omen, as fear was by no means a sign of want of merit, but often the contrary. We then chatted for a few minutes; and I felt myself more easy, and requested leave to repeat a few speeches in imitation of the then principal stage representatives. "Nay—now," says Garrick, "sir, you must take care of this; for I used to call myself the first at this business." I luckily began with an imitation of Foote. It is difficult here to determine whether Garrick hated or feared Foote the most; sometimes one, sometimes the other was predominant; but from the attention of a few minutes, his looks brightened; the glow of his countenance transfused to mine, and he eagerly desired a repetition of the same speech. I was animated; forgot Garrick was present, and spoke at perfect ease.

"Hey—now, now, what all," says Garrick. "How, really—this—this—is——" (With his usual hesitation and repetition of words.) "Why—well—well. Do call on

me again on Monday at eleven. You may depend upon every assistance in my power. I will see my brother manager, Mr. Lacey, to-day, and let you know the result."'

On Monday young Tate Wilkinson 'slid up Southampton Street,' and was speedily admitted to the presence of the great actor, who addressed him as 'young gentleman,' told him he had determined to put him on the books at thirty shillings a week for the ensuing season, and requested a repetition of his imitation of Mr. Foote. From this the ingenious youth, who was flattered by the famous actor's attention, proceeded to give a representation of Peg Woffington as Lady Macbeth; for being a clever young gentleman, and knowing the terms on which Garrick had parted with that lady, he had no doubt his efforts in this direction would afford a satisfaction exceeding that enjoyed even by his mimicry of Foote. Indeed, so vastly entertained was Garrick by the lad's imitation of the woman he had once loved, and so boisterous was his laughter, that Wilkinson was obliged to stop.

'I thought it very comical,' he writes, 'and that the joke might not be lost, I laughed too; but, on the merriment ceasing, I perceived a concealed third laughter, which greatly puzzled me, when on a sudden a green cloth double door flew open, which I found led to a little breakfast-parlour, and discovered a most elegant lady, no less a personage [illegible] Mrs. Garrick, who had, it seems, been purposely po[illegible]here for her secret opinion of my imitations. Mrs[illegible]rick apologized for her rudeness and intrusion, [illegible]fessed she had taken possession of that snug spot [illegible]bserved at the desire of Mr. Garrick, as from his ac[illegible]unt of my imitations she expected to be much gratified; but when

she heard the tones of Mrs. Woffington, the ridicule was so strongly pointed that it was not in her power to refrain from laughter by the pleasure and great satisfaction she had received.'

Tate Wilkinson was delighted by the gratification which his mimicry of the great actress afforded Garrick and his wife; for Peg Woffington, having but a little while before resented a supposed insult from the youth, he was not disposed to regard her with amicable feelings. The cause of the offence happened in this way. One day Tate Wilkinson was asked by his friend, young Captain Forbes, who held a commission in His Majesty's Guards, and was, moreover, son of my Lord Granard, an Irish peer, to dine with him at 'The Bedford Arms.' When they had eaten and drank to their full satisfaction, they felt disposed, after the manner of young gentlemen, to make merry.

'Tate,' said the captain, 'we will go to the play, and I will treat you to the boxes.'

At this time Wilkinson was well known to Mr. Rich, to whom indeed he had presented himself as a candidate for a vacancy in his company. The worthy and cat-loving manager, who was unable to speak the king's English without blundering, and who yet cherished the belief in his harlequin's soul that he could win renown as a great tragedian if he but condescended to make a trial of his abilities, undertook to give the young gentleman lessons in elocution, and, what was of more use to him, gave him the *entrée* to his *lévees*, and free admission in front of the house. Now, when young Captain Forbes went to the playhouse, he would sit only in the stage-box, where, being in full guard regimentals, he looked a conspicuous figure, and, 'being jolly with the bottle,' he drew considerable attention to himself and his friend.

Some of the players seeing Wilkinson in a stage box, and believing he had installed himself there without payment, were indignant at what they considered his impudent bravado, and spoke to Rich, who sent a messenger to order him from his 'improper situation.' Captain Forbes soon convinced the servant of his mistake, and sent back word that Mr. Wilkinson was seated there by proper authority. It happened that Peg Woffington, who was playing Clarissa in 'The Confederacy,' was on the stage at the moment the box-keeper received his answer, and, having heard that a young gentleman named Wilkinson was in the habit of mimicking her, she approached the box, looked at him in a manner that made him shrink back, and finished her speech in a sarcastic manner.

'My unfortunate star sure was then predominant,' says Wilkinson, speaking of this night, 'for at that moment a woman of the town, in the balcony above where I was seated, repeated some words in a remarkably shrill tone, which occasioned a general laugh; like electricity, it caught Mrs. Woffington's ear, whose voice was far from being enchanting; on perceiving the pipe squeak on her right hand, and being conscious of the insult she had then given apparently to me, it struck her comprehension so forcibly that she immediately concluded I had given the retort upon her in that open and audacious manner. She again turned and darted her lovely eyes, though assisted by the furies, which made me look confounded and sheepish; all which only served to confirm my condemnation.'

The next day he attended Rich's *levée*, and was kept waiting in an outer room for a considerable time; when at last the Woffington—who was a woman in all

things, and resented, with right feminine indignation, the insult which she believed he had given her—swept through the apartment without a word, courtesy, or even an inclination of her head, and proceeded to her sedan; from which, acting on second thoughts, she hastily returned, and, advancing towards the youth with queenlike steps, and eyes that flashed with resentment, said, 'Mr. Wilkinson, I have made a visit this morning to Mr. Rich, to insist on his not giving you any engagement whatever. Your impudence to me last night, where you had with such assurance placed yourself, is one proof of your ignorance; added to that, I heard you echo my voice when I was acting, and I sincerely hope, in whatever barn you are suffered as an unworthy stroller, that you will fully experience the same contempt you dared last night to offer me.'

'Without waiting or permitting me to reply,' says Wilkinson, 'she darted once more to her chair. I really was so astonished, frightened, and bewildered that I knew not how to act or think.'

When he saw the manager, later on, that worthy said to him: 'Muster Whittington, you are unfit for the stage, and I won't larn you—you may go, Mr. Whittington.' 'And,' adds Wilkinson, 'he stroked his favourite cat.'

This burst of indignation showered on the head of a saucy young jackanapes, whom Peg Woffington believed had openly insulted her, and who was no doubt more guilty than he confessed, lasted but a little while; and when next he mentions her name, he speaks of her manner softening towards him. Her heart was far too large and generous, her nature too genial, to harbour petty revenge.

Tate Wilkinson was indeed a precocious youth, who soon became vastly proud of his imitations, which, he says, somewhat egotistically, 'when really produced upon the stage, were thought superior to Mr. Garrick's or Mr. Foote's. For those particular actors or actresses whose manner and voice I so strongly presented to the public, were taken on the truest ground; that of feeling myself at the time the person I imitated, and not exaggerated into buffoonery; and this was my work, my toil, my constant practice for some years before I played in London. I had so habituated myself to this fluctuation of voice, and to move and change my features to those of the actors and actresses I judged myself personating, that from impulsive enthusiasm—for I cannot think of another word—I felt as if each individual I spoke and acted like were at that instant under the restrictions and reverence due to a real audience of the most collected and fashionable consequence.'

His love for approbation, indeed, outgrew his discretion; for presently we find him mimicking not only Peg Woffington, but the greatest lights of the stage, to their very faces. The first actor whom he selected to favour with a personation which held the mirror up to nature, was Foote, who had heretofore been considered unapproachable in this line, and was, as a consequence, dreaded, not only by those of his own profession, but by all men of distinction, who lived in daily and hourly apprehension of being held up to public laughter by the famous wit. Yet, as it so often happens with those who delight in imitating and burlesquing the marked characteristics of their friends, the mimic's own peculiarities were, we are assured, 'more extravagant than

any person's whose gait, or gesture, or history he might choose to record or divert himself with.'

It happened when Samuel Foote was going to fulfil an engagement in Dublin, he told young Wilkinson—to whom he had been introduced by Garrick—he would be very glad of his company, to help to divert the town; and that he would 'fix him on genteel terms' with Sheridan. This proposal Wilkinson, whose engagement with Garrick had not yet commenced, avows, 'was a cheering cordial elixir to my drooping spirits, and to my still more drooping pockets.' He therefore accompanied Foote to the Irish capital; where the great wit and mimic was about to give his entertainment called 'Tea,' in which he appeared as Mr. Puzzle, the instructor; and Wilkinson, or as it was announced upon the bills, 'A Young Gentleman who never appeared on any stage before,' as his 'First Pupil.' For this performance there was no rehearsal, it being arranged that Wilkinson should appear when called upon, and give such imitations of well-known characters as pleased him best. At eight o'clock on this evening, when he was to make his first bow to the public, he was in full dress behind the scenes. The company were all strangers to him, and were not prepared to receive him with much civility; for, if he were a blockhead, he was not worth their notice; and if an impudent mimic, bred by Foote in his worthy art, he was certainly a despicable intruder. He therefore, feeling his company was not desirable, left his solitary seat in the green-room, and went on to the stage, when, looking through a hole in the curtain, he beheld a most crowded and splendid audience, such as, he says, 'might strike the boldest with dismay.' Moreover, this assembly looked forward with some curiosity to the first

appearance of a young gentleman whose talents as a mimic, and whose position as the son of a clergyman on whom sentence of transportation had been pronounced, had become topics of general conversation in the city.

Presently the farce began, and Foote gained great applause and created roars of laughter. 'In the second act my time of trial drew near,' writes the younger mimic; 'in about ten minutes I was called. "Mr. Wilkinson! Mr. Wilkinson!" Had I obeyed a natural impulse, I was really so alarmed that I should have run away. But honour pricked me on—there was no alternative—my brain was a chaos; but on I went. I must have made a very timid, sheepish appearance, I trembled like a frightened clown in a pantomime, which Foote perceiving, good-naturedly took me by the hand and led me forward, when the burst of applause was wonderful; but it could not instantly remove my timidity, and I had no prompter to trust to, as all depended on myself. Foote, perceiving I was not fit for action, said, "This young gentleman is merely a novice on the stage, he has not been properly drilled. But come, my young friend, walk across the stage; breathe yourself and show your figure." I did so; the walk encouraged me, and another loud applause succeeded. I felt a glow which seemed to say, "What have you to fear? Now or never. This is the night that either makes you or undoes you quite." I mustered up courage, and began with the imitation of Mr. Sparks. The audience were struck with the forcible manner of the speaking and the striking resemblance of the features, a particular excellence in my mode of mimicry. The applause resounded even to my astonishment, and the audience were equally amazed, as they found something

where they, in fact, expected nothing. Next speech was Barry in Alexander. I now found myself vastly elated and clever; fear was vanished, and joy and pleasure succeeded; a proof what barometers we are, how soon elated, how soon depressed. When quite at ease, I began with Mrs. Woffington in Lady Macbeth, and Barry in Macbeth. The laughter was so loud and incessant that I could not proceed. This was a minute of luxury; I was then in the regions of bliss; I was encored. A sudden thought occurred; I felt all hardy, all alert, all nerve, and immediately advanced six steps, and, before I spoke, I received the full testimony of true imitation. My master, as he was called, sat on the stage at the same time; I repeated twelve or fourteen lines of the very prologue he had spoken that night. I, before Mr. Foote, presented his other self; his manner, his voice, his oddities, I so exactly hit that the pleasure, the glee it gave may easily be conceived to see and hear the mimic mimicked, and it really gave me a complete victory over Mr. Foote; for the suddenness of the action tripped up his audacity so much that he, with all his effrontery, sat foolish, wishing to appear equally pleased with the audience, but knew not how to play the difficult part; he was unprepared, the surprise and satisfaction was such that, without any conclusion, the curtain was obliged to drop with reiterated bursts of applause.'

At this piece of audacity Foote was vastly piqued and chagrined. But he who had so unsparingly ridiculed his friends and foes alike, whether in the pulpit, or on the stage, or at the bar, dared not openly complain of now meeting with treatment like unto theirs. He therefore sought to conceal his feelings, and merely

remarked to Wilkinson that this was decidedly his worst imitation. At the end of six weeks Foote was obliged to leave Dublin, to fulfil a London engagement, and Wilkinson was left behind in the enjoyment of a salary of three guineas a week from Sheridan. For a couple of months he continued to delight the town, and drew crowded houses, much to Sheridan's satisfaction, Now, in order to give more variety to the entertainment, Sheridan, when Wilkinson called on him at his own house one night, suggested that, instead of mimicking the London actors and actresses as he had done, he would exhibit the manners of the players then engaged in his company. This Wilkinson refused, urging that his mimicry would so incense the performers that they would insult him, and refuse to play for him when his benefit came round. But these considerations had no influence with Sheridan, who repeated the request more eagerly, and was vexed at its being declined. Wilkinson then hit on what he considered a bright idea.

'My dear sir,' said he to the manager, in a confidential tone, 'a thought has just entered my head, which I think will draw money and be of infinite service to myself.' Sheridan asked him with the utmost eagerness what it was. 'Why, sir,' said the precocious youth, 'your rank in the theatre, and a gentleman so well known in Dublin on and off the stage, must naturally occasion any striking imitation of yourself to have a wonderful effect. I have paid great attention to your whole mode of acting, not only since I have come here, but when you played the whole season at Covent Garden Theatre, and actually think I can do a great deal on your stage with you *alone*, without interfering with any other actor's manner whatever.'

The effect of this suggestion on Sheridan was marvellous. 'Hogarth's pencil could not testify more astonishment,' says Wilkinson. 'He turned pale and red alternately, his lips quivered; I instantaneously saw I was in the wrong box. It was some time before he could speak; he took a candle from off the table, and showing me the room door—when at last his words found utterance—said he never was so insulted. What! to be taken off by a buffoon upon his own stage! And as to mimiery, what is it? Why, a proceeding which he never could countenance; that he even despised Garrick and Foote for introducing so mean an art; and he then very politely desired me to walk down-stairs. I was obliged to march, and really felt petrified with my bright thought, which had turned out so contrary from what I had ignorantly expected. Mr. Sheridan held the candle for me only till I got to the first landing, and then hastily removed it, grumbling and squeaking to himself, and leaving me to feel my way in the dark down a pair and a half of steep stairs, and to guess my road, in hopes of finding the street door.'

But even this experience did not serve to teach Wilkinson that imitation is not always the sincerest flattery. The next actor whom he gave an imitation of before his face, was Garrick, whom, the young mimic admits, 'certainly was the most universal great actor the world ever produced.' On his return to England, Wilkinson played in the provinces, and was engaged subsequently to appear as one of the Drury Lane company, for the season commencing September, 1758; though on what date, or in what character, it did not please Mr. Garrick to inform him. One day, whilst he was yet in suspense as to his appearance on the stage of

Drury Lane, he was walking down James Street, when he heard a voice call after him repeatedly. Turning round, he saw Foote, whom he had not met since his return from Ireland. The elder mimic greeted him cordially; 'and sure,' says Wilkinson, 'if ever one person possessed the talents of pleasing more than another, Mr. Foote was certainly the man.' Away he went with Foote to dinner, for the wit, whenever he had money, kept an open table, loved good company, and drank most excellent wine. When they had dined, as pleasantly as might be, and the claret was circulating, Foote informed him he was to play at Drury Lane in a short time, and then expressed his anxiety as to what Wilkinson had been doing since last they met; whereon the youth told him his story, which he ended by stating he had signed an agreement to join Garrick's company, but that gentleman would not tell him in what part he was to play.

Hearing which, Foote, who had as little love for Garrick as Garrick entertained for him, replied, 'You must, Wilkinson, plainly see, and be convinced, that dirty hound, Garrick, does not mean to do you any service, or wish you any success; but, on the contrary, he is a secret enemy, and if he can prevent your doing well, be assured he will. I know his heart so well, that, if you give me permission to ask for your first attempt on his stage, to be in my piece, the hound will certainly refuse the moment I mention it. And though his little soul would rejoice to act Richard the Third in the dog days, before the hottest kitchen fire, for a sop in the pan, yet I know his mean soul so perfectly, that if, on his refusal, I, with a grave face, tell him I have his figure exactly made and dressed as a puppet in my

closet, ready for public admiration, the fellow will not only consent to your acting, but, what is more extraordinary, his abject fears will make him lend me money, if I should say I want it.'

Wilkinson, readily agreeing to Foote's proposal that they should both play in the same piece, Garrick, who greatly feared the wit, gave his consent to the arrangement; and, in due time, the 'Diversions of the Morning' was performed at Drury Lane theatre; the principal characters by Mr. Foote and Mr. Wilkinson. The diversions were caused by the instructions of Mr. Puzzle to his pupils in the art of acting, or, in other words, of mimicry. Now, amongst those who suffered most from the efforts of this master and his pupil, were the Covent Garden players, who were considered fair game for their scathing ridicule. Amongst them was one in particular, an actor named Sparks, whose mannerisms had served as an excellent butt for Wilkinson when he played in Dublin, and now vastly delighted London town. It was one day said that Sparks was so hurt by the mimicry that he had taken to his bed, and was dangerously ill; a report that Foote contradicted, for he declared he had met Mrs. Sparks going home with two pounds of mutton chops on a skewer for her husband's dinner.

Sparks was, however, mightily hurt by this ridicule, and waited on Garrick to protest against such unhandsome usage, and request that the great Mr. Garrick would not suffer him, as a man of credit in private life, and an actor of estimation in public, to be destroyed by such an illiberal attack on his livelihood.

'Why, now—hey, Sparks,' said Garrick, with his usual hesitation; said to be the result of affectation,

and a fear of being led into promises which he never meant to perform. 'Why, Wilkinson—and be damned to him—they say he takes me off, and he takes Foote off—and so, you see, you are in very good company.'

'Very true, sir,' said Sparks, bluntly, 'but many an honest man has been ruined by keeping too good company;' saying which, he at once took his departure.

At noon, Garrick went to Drury Lane, paraded up and down the stage in seeming agitation, called all his actors round him, and then sent for Wilkinson, whom he rated soundly, pretending to have the greatest abhorrence of an art which he had practised at the outset of his career, to the indignation of many.

'Now, hey, damn it, Wilkinson,' said he, 'why will you take a liberty with these gentlemen, the players, and without my consent. You never consulted or told me who you were to take off, as you call it. Hey, now, that is, I say—but you and Foote, and Foote and you, think you are managers of this theatre. But to convince you of the contrary—and be damned to ye—I here order you, before these gentlemen, to desist from taking any liberty with any one of Covent Garden theatre. I do not allow myself such unbecoming liberties, nor will I permit them from another, where I am manager; and, if you dare to repeat such a mode of conduct after my commands, I will fine you the penalty of your article.'

To this speech, which was merely intended for the benefit of his company, Kitty Clive must join her voice.

'Fie, fie, young man, fie, fie,' said Kitty; that it was impudent and shocking for a young to gain applause at the expense of the players.

said she, 'I can, and do myself take off, but then it is only the Mingotti, and a set of Italian squalling devils, who come over to England to get our bread from us; and, I say, curse them all for a set of Italian hounds.'

Presently in came Foote, singing a snatch of a French song, 'to show his good breeding;' on which Garrick laid bare the matter before him, and told him that from motives of humanity and consideration he was resolved to put a stop to Wilkinson's proceedings. 'If indeed now,' said the liberal manager, 'he could have taken me off; why, now, as to that, I should have liked it vastly, and so would Mrs. Garrick;' but he insisted that the Covent Garden players should be let alone. To the great surprise of Wilkinson, who was not familiar with the ways of managers, Foote seconded all Garrick had said, and the young mimic was much cast down. Therefore, when night came, he prepared to act only the part of Bounce in the farce, without giving any imitations. But when this was finished, there was a great call for the mimicry with which he had usually favoured the house; Garrick and Foote having planted many people in the theatre for the purpose.

The clamour continuing, Garrick ordered the lights to be let down, 'which consisted of six chandeliers hanging over the stage, every one containing twelve candles in brass sockets, and a heavy iron, flourished and joined to each bottom, large enough for a street palisade. This ceremony being complied with, Mr. Garrick said it would, with the lamps also lowered, be a convincing proof to the audience that all was over.' They, however, refused to stir, but called louder than before for Wilkinson, and caused a great tumult. Then Foote, who had been standing at perfect ease at the

wings, enjoying the sport, came forward, and made a vastly polite speech. He was exceedingly sorry to have given cause for any disturbance. He begged to assure them that Mr. Wilkinson's performance had been introduced by way of entertainment, and not with intentions to injure any individual whatever. Indeed, a harmless laugh was all to which the young gentleman had aspired. Mr. Wilkinson had desired him to remit his grateful acknowledgments for the kind indulgence with which they had honoured him, and regretted that what had been intended to divert had been misconstrued into wickedness. For Mr. Garrick and he, Mr. Foote, had received remonstrances and cruel reflections from certain performers, who alleged that they suffered in their reputations from the imitations. Therefore Mr. Garrick and himself had, from motives of generosity, yielded to such importunity and allegations, and had cheerfully sacrificed that part of the entertainment, for the sake of affording peace and happiness to others, an act which he trusted would meet with the approbation of the audience, whose favour it would ever be their study to merit and obtain.

This pretty speech was treated with anger and contempt; the audience were not to be denied their diversions for the sake of the tender feelings of any player; and therefore called aloud again and again for Wilkinson. Foote now rushed into the green-room, and told Wilkinson he must immediately go on the stage.

'And what must I do when I am there?' said the youth, who felt completely bewildered.

'Anything,' replied Foote. 'Do what you like; and treat them to as much of me as you please, only come on at once.'

'What does Mr. Garrick say?' asked the mimic. 'For, without his orders, I cannot proceed,' and he turned to the manager.

'Hey, why now, hey,' said Garrick. 'Why now, as they insist, I really do not see that I am bound to run the hazard of having a riot in my theatre to please Sparks and the rest of the Covent Garden people; and, if they are not satisfied with your serving up Mr. Foote as a dish, why it is a pity—as I to-day observed—but you could give me. But that, you say, is not possible, with any hopes of success. Why now, haste, they are making a devilish noise; and so, as you have begun your damned taking off, why go on with it, and do what comes into your head; and do not plague me with your cursed tricks again.'

Wilkinson took him at his word; went on the stage, and, after mimicking Foote, next proceeded to give a representation of the great Mr. Garrick. The audience were at first vastly surprised, then immensely tickled, and finally so delighted, that they filled the house with loud acclamations. Garrick was terribly astonished, and, being ever sensitive to the slightest ridicule, was highly incensed, so much so, indeed, that for the remainder of the season 'he never deigned,' says Wilkinson, 'to let his eye grace me with its observance, and of course not a single word ever came to comfort me from his royal lips; all conveyed whenever I met him, austerity, anger, and dislike.' But Tate Wilkinson's imitations of Foote and Garrick by no means ended here. Indeed, these actors—who by their mimicry had been for years the plague of numbers and the dread of each other—now, by a just judgment, looked with fear and trembling on this youth, who was capable of

holding them up to the laughter of the town. When Wilkinson's engagement terminated at Drury Lane, Garrick was by no means anxious to renew it, and the mimic went adventuring in the provinces, where he met with great success. But presently, being at Winchester, he 'steered once more for dear London, to see what was going on in the great world.'

On the morning of his departure from Winchester, he received a present of a hamper, containing Bury pears and other fruits, from my Lord Tavistock, an admirer of his talents, and a kindly nobleman withal. When the clever youth arrived in town, he bought a fine hare, and adding it to the hamper, sent them to Rich as a genteel present worthy of his acceptance. The worthy manager was flattered by this attention, and in return invited Wilkinson to dine with him; a favour he declined, but he subsequently presented himself at one of the great harlequin's morning *levées*. Rich received him with a vast show of civility, and expressed himself delighted with the success the young fellow had recently achieved.

'Why, Muster Williamski,' said he, it being one of this eccentric man's peculiarities to mispronounce all surnames, 'you are much improved since I first began to *larn* you. I think I must engage you. Name your own terms.'

An agreement was promptly arrived at, and Wilkinson proposed that 'The Minor' should be placed on the Covent Garden stage. This was a three-act farce written by Foote, in which the author had mimicked Whitfield, the preacher, Langford, the auctioneer, and a certain lady known to the gay part of the town as Mother Douglas. Wilkinson of course determined to

give such representations of Foote as would set the whole town in a roar. To this proposition Rich at once consented, and requested Wilkinson to cast the parts, on which the latter selected Sparks to play Richard Wealthy, a prominent character. Now this actor, remembering how he had been mimicked at Drury Lane, declared he was by no means willing 'to perform or assist in any piece for the advantage of a villain who, unprovoked, had endeavoured to hurt him in his peace of mind, and injure his reputation as an actor with the public.'

These were wrathful words indeed; but Wilkinson was resolved to appease the man who had uttered them. He therefore explained that it was by the artifices of Foote and Garrick he had been forced to give such imitations at Drury Lane; and that during his engagement at Covent Garden he had no intention of mimicking any actors but Foote and Garrick, whose treatment of him, he considered, justified his resolution. Sparks, on hearing this, became pacified; and as he, in common with many others, cherished an old grudge against these mimics, whom he accused of meanness and ingratitude, he accepted the part for which he was cast, and, moreover, promised Wilkinson every assistance in his power. The farce was, accordingly, put in rehearsal, and all went well until the rumour of their intentions reached Foote's ears, when it caused him the greatest possible alarm.

He who had spared neither friend nor foe, neither host nor guest, shrank from the ridicule which now threatened him, and determined to protest against it, with might and main. So it happened one morning whilst Rich, Wilkinson, and Sparks were holding a council of war in the manager's house, that a thunder-

ing rap at the door made them jump from their seats, whilst the bell rang in the most alarming manner imaginable. Immediately after a servant entered the room where the three sat, saying Mr. Foote had come to wait on Mr. Rich. The manager went down to his visitor, who greeted his appearance with a storm of abuse.

'Damn it, you old hound,' he shouted, vigorously, 'if you dare let Wilkinson, that pug-nosed dog, take any liberty with me as to mimicry, I will bring you yourself, Rich, on the stage. If you want to engage that pug, black his face, and let him hand a tea-kettle in a pantomime. If he dares to appear in my character in "The Minor," I will instantly produce your old, stupid, ridiculous self, with your cats, and your hound of a mimic, all together, next week at Drury Lane, for the general diversion of the pit, boxes, and galleries; and that will be paying you, you squinting old Hecate, too great a compliment.' Saying which the great mimic darted out of the house in a violent passion.

When he had departed, Rich went back to his friends with a most woeful countenance. 'Why, Muster Sparkish,' said he, disconsolately, 'Muster Footeye has declared, if I let Muster Williamskin act his parts or mimic him on the stage, he will write parts for me, my cats, and Muster Williamskin, and bring us all out at Drury Lane. So we must not act what we intended.' To which Sparks made reply, 'Why, surely, sir,' said he, 'you cannot be so weak as to let Mr. Foote's vapouring visit frighten you from your purpose, or intimidate you from having a piece acted that may be of service to your theatre, and to this young gentleman.'

Rich was yet frightened, and Sparks went on to say it was truly strange and laughable that Foote, of all

people, should confess himself mortified at the prospect of being mimicked, he who had been for years 'an universal torturer and spoiler of private peace, from licentious liberties he had taken.'

Rich was, however, still apprehensive of Foote: 'I believe,' says Wilkinson, 'he dreaded an affront on his favourite cat more than on himself.' In due time, however, he consented to the production of 'The Minor,' and a brilliant and crowded audience assembled to see Wilkinson's imitations. He mimicked Foote 'from top to toe,' as he tells us; 'and as to Mr. Garrick, I made no scruple.' One night Garrick sat in one of the boxes of Covent Garden theatre, to see his counterfeit presentment, drawn thither by curiosity, or by a desire to appear indifferent to ridicule. Presently, when the young jackanapes recited some lines from Macbeth in the manner of the great actor, the cry, 'Garrick. 'Tis Garrick,' rang through the house.

'From that night,' says Wilkinson, 'he never forgave nor forgot, nor did he ever speak to me again to the day of his death.

CHAPTER XVI.

Spranger Barry—His *Début* in Dublin—Arrival in London—His Personal Beauty and Sweetness of Voice—Plays at Drury Lane—His Personation of Othello—Dissatisfied with Garrick—Goes to Covent Garden—The Rival Romeos—The Rival Juliets—Excitement of the Town—Tragedies Produced by Garrick—Monsieur Jean Noverre—the Chinese Festival—George II. at the Playhouse—His Impressions of Richard III.—Riot at Drury Lane.

MEANWHILE Garrick continued to attract and delight the town; constantly affording his audiences variety by the introduction of tragedies and comedies selected

from old, or accepted from contemporary authors. But, with all his careful management, inimitable acting, and great reputation, he was not without a rival, who at one time threatened to deprive the great theatrical monarch of his throne.

This was Spranger Barry, the descendant of an old Irish family, and the son of a Dublin silversmith. He himself had indeed been for some time engaged in that trade, which was as uncongenial to his tastes as it was unprofitable to his pocket. All his desires tending towards the stage, which his fine physical gifts were so calculated to adorn, he at the age of four-and-twenty became an actor, and made his *début* as Othello at Smock Alley theatre in the winter of 1743. He literally fascinated the town, as much by his singularly handsome presence and the rare sweetness of his voice as by the force of his acting. In a little while the noise of his reputation crossed the Channel, and three years from the date of his first appearance he was engaged by Lacey to play at Drury Lane. On his arrival in London, Charles Macklin extended the hand of friendship to his young countryman, gave him some lessons in elocution, and showed him the curiosities of the town. Walking with his mentor in St. James's Park, Barry's agreeable presence attracted universal attention; and, on Macklin being asked who his companion was, he replied, with a twinkle in his eye, 'Why, it's a young Irish nobleman—the Earl of Munster.' The story was believed, and, when Barry made his bow in Drury Lane, half his audience were convinced an Irish peer had turned player. The sensation he had made in Dublin was surpassed by that which he created in the greater capital; according to Murphy, he 'blazed out' upon the

stage, and 'gave delight to the metropolis.' Few actors had gained such an enthusiastic reception. Full six feet high, commanding in figure, of an aristocratic bearing, Barry was considered the perfection of physical beauty; whilst his voice, clear and singularly musical, gained him the title of 'the silver-tongued'; for, as Rich said, 'he could wheedle a bird off a tree.' Murphy bears testimony that he was 'certainly one of the handsomest men in Europe'; whilst it is again affirmed of him and Peg Woffington 'that, for mere human beauty, they have never been surpassed.'

Though Barry eschewed that deep study and patient care which enabled Garrick to bring his gifts to maturity, yet, by reason of his great sensibility and natural tact, he was perhaps the more effective player. Barry felt the force and pathos of every line he spoke; Garrick could, on leaving an audience bathed in tears, make jokes at the wings which convulsed his hearers with laughter. The whole town was enthusiastic concerning this new actor. Garrick freely acknowledged him 'the best lover upon the stage'; whilst Davies adds his opinion that, 'in scenes of love, tenderness, and all the mingled passions of the soul,' he was not inferior to the great Montford. Amongst those who witnessed him play Othello on the night of his first appearance at Drury Lane was old Colley Cibber, who afterwards went about declaring that this young man's Othello was superior to the immortal Betterton's; and no higher meed of praise could he bestow.

His performance of this part was indeed remarkable; Kirkman says it was 'amazingly great, for he rose through all the passions of this character to the utmost extent of central imagination.' The public had seen

Quin, with his clumsy figure and heavy declamation, play this part in a big powdered wig, and with a black face, which made 'such a magpie appearance of his head' as tended more to produce laughter than tears. Garrick had also played the Moor, but had not succeeded in the part to his satisfaction or that of his friends. He had as Othello worn a Moorish dress, which served to make his figure smaller than it really was. After witnessing the play one night, a friend of Quin's hastened to describe Garrick's personation to the sturdy old actor.

'Why, you must be mistaken, my dear sir,' said Quin, when he had heard him; 'the little man could not appear as the Moor; he must rather have looked like Desdemona's little black boy that attends her tea-kettle.'

Now, however, when Barry played the part, the town paid him the highest compliment possible by stating that it recognized for the first time the probability of Desdemona falling in love with such a Moor as he represented.

'In Othello,' says Arthur Murphy, 'he was master of the quick vicissitudes of love, of grief, of rage, and tenderness; and in the conflict, or, as Shakespeare has it, in the tempest and whirlwind of the passions, his voice was harmony in an uproar.' So realistic, indeed, was his passion, so expressive his jealousy, that when he delivered the line, 'I'll tear her all to pieces,' many women screamed with terror; whilst the last scene, in which Desdemona is done to death, made the whole house shudder.

In some other personations he was almost, if not equally, successful. Garrick, having once seen him play Orestes, never after attempted that part in London.

His Alexander was pronounced inimitable, and his Romeo the perfection of love-making. In most of the characters he personated, he was indeed successful. 'All exquisitely tender or touching writing,' says an anonymous contemporary critic, 'came mended from his mouth. There was a pathos, a sweetness, a delicacy in his utterance which stole upon the mind, and forced conviction on the memory. Every sentiment of honour and virtue, recommended to the ear by the language of the author, was riveted to the heart by the utterance of Barry.'

In private life he was scarcely less lauded than in public. He was caressed for his beauty by women of quality, sought after for his conviviality by men of distinction, and courted for the excellency of his parts by society in general. In return, he entertained the town with a magnificence which, if suited to his elegant manners and superb tastes, far out-stripped his income. As an instance of his extravagance and love of ostentation, it may be mentioned, that when his friend, Henry Pelham, the prime minister, invited himself to sup with him, Barry entertained him with a princely banquet. 'I could not have given a more splendid supper myself,' said the minister, who was by no means pleased with the profession; and he never sat at the actor's table again. To crown all, Frederick, Prince of Wales, honoured him with his patronage, and advised him to take lessons in dancing from his favourite, Desnoyers, by way of gaining additional ease and grace in his movements; and Barry judiciously complying with the hint, the prince at once extended his friendship to the great actor.

Such triumphs, so freely awarded, both socially and

professionally, might have undone the wisest man. They served after a short time to make Barry, if not jealous of Garrick as a rival, at least dissatisfied with him as a manager; and he therefore left Drury Lane. According to Boaden, the new actor 'began to grow spoiled by success, and was frequently absent from his duty under the plea of bad health. He assured the public, by advertisement, that "he scorned all trick and evasion, and that nothing but real illness had, or should ever, oblige him to decline his duty as an actor." He, however, could no longer bear to be second, where it was yet impossible he should be first.' Barry complained that he was called upon to act at improper seasons and on unlucky days; such as when a woman of quality had summoned a prodigious company to a concert of music, or a rout; or upon an opera night; or when some public assembly was announced, which prevented his having a good audience. Then Garrick, according to Davies, desired him to choose his own days. 'Very well,' said Barry, 'that is all I can ask.' 'But even that compliance,' says Garrick's biographer, 'did not produce the desired effect. Garrick's Hamlet still drew greater crowds than Barry's; but this, indeed, was a misfortune which Garrick was not anxious to remove.' Charles Macklin, in speaking of Barry's departure from the Drury Lane company, speaks of it as 'one of those revolutions which take place in theatrical affairs,' and adds that 'Barry, disgusted with being under the control of a rival—who certainly had it in his power not to show him fair play—revolted to Rich.' Moreover, Mrs. Cibber, who had, since the departure of Peg Woffington, played the principal female parts at Drury Lane, likewise rebelled, and went over to the opposition playhouse.

Accordingly, when the theatrical season of 1750 commenced, the two great rivals divided the attention and favour of the town; and it was plain to all they were prepared for deadly combat. Garrick was in himself a tower of strength, and could boast a company which included Mrs. Pritchard, Kitty Clive, and Woodward, three excellent players, together with George Anne Bellamy, whom he had selected to replace Mrs. Cibber; for which purpose he had given her an excellent training during the previous summer months. Rich, on the other hand, numbered not only Barry, but Peg Woffington, Mrs. Cibber, Quin, and Macklin among his troupe, a prodigiously strong body withal.

On the 8th of September, Garrick opened Drury Lane with 'The Merchant of Venice'; when 'an occasional prologue,' by the manager, was spoken by Kitty Clive. In this he struck the key-note of the feelings which actuated both houses—

> 'Strengthened by new allies, our foes prepare,
> "Cry havock, and let slip the dogs of war."
> To shake our souls, the papers of the day
> Draw forth the adverse bands in dread array;
> A power might shake the boldest with dismay.
> Yet, fearless still, we take the field with spirit,
> Armed cap-a-pie, in self-sufficient merit.'

On the twenty-fourth of the same month, Covent Garden began its season, with Macklin in 'The Miser.' Four nights later, however, the grand battle was commenced, when 'Romeo and Juliet' was announced for performance at both houses.

Romeo was Barry's favourite character, and as Juliet, Mrs. Cibber most excelled. They had both been carefully trained by Garrick in their respective parts as the hero and heroine of this tragedy; which when acted by

them during the previous season at the Lane, had drawn large and appreciative audiences. The play was therefore regarded by Barry as his trump card, which he now, eagerly and with a certainty of success, flung down in the face of his great rival. Garrick, however, was not taken unawares. Anticipating this challenge, he had secretly prepared for it; had carefully studied Romeo, and instructed Miss Bellamy in the part of Juliet, and was therefore ready and willing to accept this open contest. Accordingly, on the first announcement of the performance of the tragedy at Rich's theatre, he likewise advertised it for the same night at Drury Lane. The Covent Garden bill promised much, and ran as follows:

BY THE COMPANY OF COMEDIANS.

AT THE THEATRE ROYAL IN COVENT GARDEN.
To-morrow, September 28, will be presented a Play, call'd
ROMEO AND JULIET.
The Part of ROMEO to be performed by Mr. BARRY.
(Being the first time of his appearing on that stage.)
And the Part of JULIET to be performed by Mrs. CIBBER.
An additional scene will be introduced, representing
THE FUNERAL PROCESSION OF JULIET.
Which will be accompanied with a solemn DIRGE never performed before, and set to music by Mr. Arne,
With the proper Decorations incident to the Play.
Boxes 5s.; Pit, 3s.; First Gallery, 2s.; Upper Gallery, 1s.
To begin exactly at Six o'clock.

Rich, who delighted in theatrical displays, was resolved that the funeral procession should take the town.

Garrick, though too shrewd a manager to neglect such an attraction, made no mention of it, but let it come as a surprise to his audience. The Drury Lane bill was as follows:

BY HIS MAJESTY'S COMPANY OF COMEDIANS.

AT THE THEATRE ROYAL IN DRURY LANE,
This day, September 28, will be revived a Play, call'd
ROMEO AND JULIET.
The Part of ROMEO to be performed by Mr. GARRICK.
(*Being the first time of his appearing in that character.*)
The Part of MERCUTIO by Mr. WOODWARD,
And the Part of JULIET to be performed by Miss BELLAMY.
(Being the first time of her appearing on that stage.)
With proper Decorations.
Boxes 5s.; Pit, 3s.; Gallery, 2s.; Upper Gallery, 1s.
It is hop'd no Gentleman will take it ill that they cannot be admitted this Night upon the Stage, or in the Orchestra, on Account of the Scenery and Music that are made Use of in the Play.

Never had there been such a contest; each actor had his adherents, who were equally confident of their hero's success; and the town generally was excited, and ran in crowds to both theatres, sometimes leaving one house at the end of the first three acts, to witness the conclusion of the play at the other. Covent Garden was, during the first nights, thronged to excess, whilst, for the greater convenience of the crowds flocking to Drury Lane, it was advertised that a passage was opened 'from Russel Street into the boxes, where ladies and gentlemen may be set down from their Coaches; and there is likewise a better accommodation made for

Chairs to come up to the house, and be kept in waiting at the End of the passage from Bridges Street.' The public was at first somewhat divided in its opinion concerning the merits of the rival Romeos and Juliets. Garrick, it was said, 'seized upon the *agonies* of love, and convulsed his audience with alarm, with frenzy and despair. Every look called upon the painter, every attitude upon the statuary;' but Barry touched all hearts by his portrayal of the gentler moods of the great passion. 'The amorous harmony of his features,' says James Kirkman, 'his melting eyes, and unequalled plaintiveness of voice, and his fine graceful figure, gave him very great superiority over Mr. Garrick in this contest. In the garden scenes of the second and fourth acts, and in the tomb scene, he was super-eminently great and affecting; indeed, he bore away the palm from Mr. Garrick in this part.'

Then, as for Miss Bellamy, the Juliet of Drury Lane, though her person was elegant, and her voice well regulated, her passion was spasmodic, and her acting lacked a finish and natural grace, which Garrick's tuition was utterly unable to supply. Mrs. Cibber, who was no less beautiful than her rival, exhibited a pathos and tenderness that stirred her hearers to tears, and charmed them beyond expression. Murphy tells us 'the expression of her countenance and the irresistible magic of her voice thrilled to the very soul of her whole audience.'

For twelve consecutive nights, the play was performed at Covent Garden, at the end of which time Mrs. Cibber declared her health was no longer able to bear the strain of so arduous a part. Rich therefore withdrew the tragedy in favour of 'The Beggars' Opera,'

which was followed by Peg Woffington's performance of Sir Harry Wildair, of which the town never seemed to tire. Garrick, however, kept the field for another night, and then produced 'a dramatic masque, call'd "Comus."' But, though he had held out longer than his rival, it could not be said he had gained a victory. This he doubtlessly felt; for it is notable he never again attempted to play Romeo, whilst Barry performed in that character twenty-three times during the season, and moreover rendered it a favourite with the public as long as youth and health were left him. This may be regarded as the test of triumph. Garrick's friends were, however, not willing to admit that he had suffered by the contest, and, as Macklin tells us, they were anxious to compromise the matter by giving Barry the superiority in the three first acts, and Garrick in the two last. 'But,' he adds, 'this *finesse* did not succeed. Romeo's meeting with Paris in the tomb scene and his last interview with Juliet were as fine specimens of Barry's abilities as any in the course of the play.'

Whilst the tragedy ran, a thousand epigrams, stories, and comparisons regarding the chief performers went the rounds of the drawing-rooms, coffee-houses, and taverns. The Drury Lane hero was a modern, the Covent Garden an Arcadian lover, it was said. Then a lady of quality declared that, had she played Juliet to Garrick's Romeo, so impassioned was he, that she should have expected he would have come up to her; but, had Barry been her lover, so seductive was he, that she should certainly have jumped down to him. Next, a critic who favoured the Romeo of one house and the Juliet of another, said he had seen Juliet and Romeo at Covent Garden, but he had seen Romeo and Juliet at

Drury Lane. Before the run ended, the town, which had at first enjoyed the contest, grew heartily sick of the play, and called out for a change in the theatrical programme; *à propos* to which, the following epigram was circulated—

> '"Well, what's to-night?" says angry Ned,
> As up from bed he rouses.
> "Romeo again!" He shakes his head.
> A plague on both your houses.'

Covent Garden, with its strong company, continued to hold its own against Garrick, and amongst the greatest attractions were the playing of Barry and the Woffington as Lord and Lady Townley; Quin and the Woffington as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth; Macklin and the Woffington as Shylock and Portia.

The next great sensation at Drury Lane was by the production of an entertainment called 'The Chinese Festival' on the stage of that theatre, five years later. Occurrences of minor interest had of course taken place meanwhile; such as when Garrick introduced the pantomime of 'Queen Mab,' remarkable for its 'great pomp of machinery, and everything that could help to *elevate*.' In this performance, it may be noted that Woodward, who had played Mercutio excellently well at Drury Lane during the Romeo and Juliet contest, now took the part of a harlequin, whilst Maddox danced upon a slack wire. Soon after came the revivals of Ben Jonson's famous comedy, 'Every Man in his Humour,' judiciously altered for the modern stage; and Colley Cibber's first play, 'Love's Last Shift,' originally produced so far back as 1695.

Later on Garrick accepted a tragedy, called 'The Brothers,' from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Young, the

admired author of 'Night Thoughts.' This play had been rehearsed five-and-twenty years previously, but had never been acted. It was now brought forward in order that the profits arising from its representation might go to the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts; a circumstance 'which did as much honour to the heart as the play itself did to the abilities of the author,' writes David Baker. It is wonderful to think that, with such a pious object in view, the prologue of the tragedy should contain such delicate sentiments as those which Kitty Clive spoke in her broadest manner, by way of accounting for its production.

> 'A scheme, forsooth, to benefit the nation!
> Some queer old whim of pious propagation.
> Lord! talk so here; the man must be a widgeon.
> Drury may propagate—but not religion.'

The tragedy was not a success. The learned author's diction 'occasionally swelled to a degree of tumour,' as we learn from Arthur Murphy's elegant criticism. Moreover, it was replete with gloom; as might indeed be expected from the writings of one who, when engaged in the labours of composition, would close the windows of his room, and sit by a lamp even at mid-day, raising his eyes from the pages before him to gaze on the skulls, bones, and instruments of death which constituted the ornaments of his study.

Not deterred by its lack of success, Garrick accepted another tragedy, called 'Boadicea,' written by Richard Glover, the author of 'Leonidas'; of whose friendship Garrick, in the days when he played at Goodman's Fields, had so proudly written to Peter, the respectable wine-merchant. The most sanguine expectations were entertained of the tragedy, and never fulfilled; for it

was found much 'better adapted to give pleasure in the closet than in the theatre.'

But Garrick, having faith in his contemporaries, and much perseverance, produced yet another tragedy, which caused greater attention than its immediate predecessors. This was 'Virginia,' by the Rev. Mr. Crisp; a scholar, a man of taste, and, what is more, a friend of my Lady Coventry, to whom he had first submitted his play. Her ladyship was not learned; it was sufficient for her and her lord that she was beautiful; but that she might have some idea as to the merits of Mr. Crisp's tragedy, 'in blank song,' she lent it to friends on whose nice judgment she could depend. These declared it delighted them beyond expression; hearing which, the charming countess, full of enthusiasm, drove in her coach to Garrick's door, and sent him word she had a moment's business with him. Whereon the great actor came and stood uncovered by her side.

'There, Mr. Garrick,' said my lady, 'I put into your hands a play which the best judges tell me will do honour to you and the author.'

'It was not necessary,' writes Arthur Murphy, 'for her to say more.

"Those eyes that tell us what the sun is made of"

had all the power of persuasion, and even of command. Garrick obeyed as if she had been a tenth muse, and prepared the play with the utmost dispatch. He, in the character of Virginius, Mossop in that of Appius, and Mrs. Cibber in Virginia, deserved the compliment paid to them by the author in his preface. But the great stroke which crowned it with success (which will appear almost incredible) was Garrick's manner of uttering two words. Claudius, the iniquitous tool of

the Decemvir, claims Virginia as a slave born in his house. He pleads his cause before Appius on his tribunal. During that time, Garrick, representing Virginius, stood on the opposite side of the scene, next to the stage door, with his arms folded across his breast, his eyes riveted to the ground, like a mute and lifeless statue.

'Being told at length that the tyrant is willing to hear him, he continued for some time in the same attitude; his countenance expressing a variety of passions, and the spectators fixed in ardent gaze. By slow degrees he raised his head; he paused; he turned round in the slowest manner, till his eyes fixed on Claudius. He still remained silent, and, after looking eagerly at the impostor, he uttered in a low tone of voice, that spoke the fulness of a broken heart, *Thou traitor.* The whole audience was electrified; they felt the impression, and a thunder of applause testified their delight. Pliny the elder, speaking of certain minerals, says, nature is never more fully displayed than in the minutest objects. This remark may be applied to the nice touches of such an actor as Garrick.'

By this time the public had grown somewhat tired of tragedies, and Garrick, ever skilful in feeling its pulse, and ever ready to anticipate its wants, produced an opera called 'The Fairies,' the libretto of which was taken from 'The Midsummer Night's Dream,' the music being supplied by one Mr. Smith, pupil of the great Handel. The opera introduced to the notice of the town two foreign singers, Signora Passerini and Signor Curioni; the former of whom alone had some twenty-seven songs to sing in the course of the evening's entertainment. Later in the season came 'The Tempest,'

'made into an opera' by the ingenious Mr. Garrick, with Beard the ballad singer, who had married Lady Henrietta Herbert, daughter of my Lord Waldegrave, in the character of Prospero. The same ingenious author likewise gave the public a version of 'The Winter's Tale,' by chopping and altering it to three acts, and presenting it under the title of 'Florizel and Perdita.'

The liberties which he took with Shakespeare were differently viewed by various critics. Johnson shook his great head, and smiled at Poor Davy's efforts; but Warburton assured the actor, so far as his alterations of 'The Winter's Tale' went, he had 'given an elegant form to a monstrous composition.' Furthermore, this judicious critic tells Garrick, 'You have, in your own additions, written up the best scenes in the play; so that you will easily imagine I read the reformed Winter's Tale with great pleasure. You have greatly improved a fine prologue.'

However, Garrick was not to lay such flattering unction to his soul without a challenge; for Theophilus Cibber, in a lecture on Shakespeare, declared 'The Midsummer Night's Dream' 'had been minced and fricasseed into a thing called "The Fairies"; "The Winter's Tale" mammocked into a droll, and "The Tempest" castrated into an opera.' But Garrick did not much care what his critics thought so long as his house was crowded and his coffers full.

And now, in November, 1755, he resolved to give the town a stronger attraction than it had before witnessed. This was to take the form of a pantomimic performance, which would include wonderful dances, and exhibit gim-crack scenery. It was to be called 'The Chinese Festival.' For the purpose of making

the entertainment a vast success, Garrick, as early as September, 1754, entered into a correspondence with Monsieur Noverre, which finally led to the engagement of that artist. Monsieur Jean Noverre was a Swiss dancer and ballet master, who had gained a vast reputation in Paris and the chief Courts of Europe by his capers. The artist informed the manager he had been invited to the Court of Bavaria, but 'knowing Mr. Garrick to have superior talent, and that his judgment would secure the suffrages of the English nation, his own interest and the delight of that country induced him to give his representations in preference there.'

The honour of his preference was, it may be added, secured by the assurance of three hundred and fifty guineas for the season, together with a benefit; moreover, his sister was to be *seconde danseuse*, at a salary of a hundred guineas. Garrick intended to place the entertainment on his stage in the handsomest manner; and accordingly gave Monsieur Jean Noverre permission to engage dancers in Paris, buy dresses from a fashionable Parisian *costumier*, and order decorations from Monsieur Boyuet, *chef* to the *Fêtes de la Cour*. So delighted was the dancer by Garrick's liberality, that he wrote to him, 'You are a divine man, and all the artists and the learned of this country desire the happiness of your acquaintance.' By October, 1755, Monsieur had graciously transported himself to London, bringing with him upwards of a score of chosen dancers; when he commenced his rehearsals for an exhibition, which it was hoped would take the town by storm. This hope was certainly fulfilled, but not in the manner anticipated.

Between the periods of Noverre's engagement and

his arrival in London, it happened that hostilities had broken out between France and England, and so patriotic did the populace become, that the fine old British prejudice was suddenly raised against the harmless dancer and his troupe. Was the bread to be taken out of the mouths of honest English actors by foreign mountebanks, it was asked? and was English coin to be freely paid at the doors of Drury Lane, to fill the pockets of this frog-eating monsieur and his snail-loving dancers? The mere idea was shameful. The true Briton would never permit such an enormity. Grub Street scribblers, unengaged actors, authors with dark tragedies in their greasy pockets, all joined in a hue-and-cry, which became sufficiently noisy to fill Garrick with serious apprehensions that a riot would be attempted at his theatre on the first production of 'The Chinese Festival.' He therefore appealed to the people through the columns of the *Public Advertiser*, using excuses and arguments to appease their angry feelings, which seem strange indeed to the eyes of modern readers. The engagement of the obnoxious dancer, he avowed, was entered into twelve months before; and 'the insinuation that at this time an extraordinary number of French dancers are engaged is groundless,' he continues; 'there being at Drury Lane at present as few of that nation as any other theatre now has, or perhaps ever had. *Mr.* Noverre and his brothers are Swiss, of a Protestant family, in the Canton of Berne; his wife and sisters Germans. There are above sixty performers concerned in the entertainment, more than forty of which are English, assisted only by a few French (five men and four women) to complete the ballet as usual.'

But these explanations did not receive general credence, and the middle and lower classes became daily more enraged. In polite circles, however, foreign modes and manners were highly fashionable; and to avow a taste for the French dancers was in itself considered a mark of distinction from vulgar prejudices. Now Garrick, being wise in his generation, sought to appease all classes, and bethought him of a plan which might reconcile the people to his performers. This was to obtain the patronage and presence of the king on the first night of the representation of 'The Chinese Festival'; for surely, if his Majesty countenanced the foreigners, his subjects could no longer protest against them on patriotic grounds. Garrick, therefore, through the favour of his friend the Duke of Grafton, then Lord Chamberlain, obtained the desired favour; and on the 8th of November, 1755, the king sat in the royal box at Drury Lane playhouse.

The first part of the night's entertainment consisted in the performance of 'The Fair Quaker of Deal,' the low humour and general coarseness of which rendered it, in the nice judgment of his Majesty, one of the finest comedies in the language he vainly attempted to speak. This was immediately followed by 'the new grand entertainment of dancing, called "The Chinese Festival";' which had no sooner begun than it was received by groans, hisses, and other marks of disapprobation, which the royal presence alone prevented from breaking into a riot. The king, somewhat disconcerted, asked the meaning of the uproar, and when informed it was merely an evidence of a patriotic spirit rising in protest against the employment of foreign artists, he laughed heartily, and enjoyed the

dancing none the less for the nationality of the performers.

Garrick now saw that 'The Chinese Festival' was not likely to be favourably received by the public, but hoped their resentment might be softened by time; he therefore laid it aside until the following Wednesday night, when it was again put on the stage. But it met with no better reception than that which had greeted its first production. The pit hissed vigorously, the gallery groaned loudly, and the whole theatre was in a tumult, whilst Monsieur Jean Noverre and his satellites skipped about the stage, pale from apprehension. The manager felt it would be wise and well to withdraw the entertainment, but he was reluctant to do so until he had derived some return for the great outlay which it had cost him. It was therefore repeated for a couple of nights, at the risk of provoking a general riot.

Garrick was in despair; but he was a man of resources, and was not yet beaten. If he could only again secure the presence of royalty at his theatre, it would lend a double sanction to the festival, which must render it acceptable to the most prejudiced. Now it happened that the king had never seen the first actor in his kingdom play, though his name had been for fourteen years the theme of every tongue. George II., it will be remembered, was no patron of the arts; indeed, he cherished a hearty contempt in his royal breast for the muses nine. He had rewarded Hogarth with a guinea when the great artist had presented him with his inimitable picture 'The March to Finchley'; and had severely reproved my Lord Hervey for writing poems, an occupation he considered

unworthy a nobleman, and only fit for such as little Mr. Pope. With this lack of taste, it is scarcely a matter of wonder that he overlooked the merits of the great actor.

Garrick therefore, now that the royal presence was likely to be of some service to him, reminded the Duke of Grafton of the neglect he laboured under in never having played before the king. His Grace promised to remedy the grievance; and accordingly it was arranged that his Majesty should see Garrick act in 'Richard the Third,' after which the wily manager resolved to gladden the royal sight by a second representation of 'The Chinese Festival.' What his Gracious Majesty's first impressions were of the great actor's performance is best told by Arthur Murphy, who was present when Mr. Fitzherbert, one of the attendants in the royal box during the king's visit, came behind the scenes when the play was over, and the sovereign had gone home.

'Garrick was impatient to know what his Majesty thought of "Richard the Third,"' writes Murphy. '"I can say nothing on that head," replied Mr. Fitzherbert, "but when an actor told Richard 'The Lord Mayor of London comes to greet you,' the king roused himself; and when Taswell entered buffooning the character, the king exclaimed, 'Duke of Grafton, I like that Lord Mayor;' and when the scene was over, he said again, 'Duke of Grafton, that is good Lord Mayor.'"

'"Well, but the warlike bustle, the drums and trumpets, and the shouts of soldiers must have awakened a great military genius."

'"I can say nothing of that," replied Mr. Fitzherbert; "but when Richard was in Bosworth Field,

roaring for a horse, his Majesty said, 'Duke of Grafton, will that Lord Mayor not come again?'"

After the royal visit, Garrick put 'The Chinese Festival' on the stage for a few nights, but on each occasion the pit and gallery received it with groans and hisses, much to the disgust of the fashionable world assembled in the boxes, who heartily applauded Monsieur Jean Noverre and his troupe. At last the long-threatened storm burst on the house, on the 18th of November, and great was the tumult thereof. On this occasion, a most brilliant and fashionable audience had assembled to witness the performance of 'The Earl of Essex,' and afterwards divert themselves with the spectacle of the French dancers. But, when the curtain rose on the entertainment in which they appeared, the hissing and groaning were louder than ever. This was of course most objectionable to the polite assembly present, and some young men of quality jumped up, drew their swords, and swore they would stand it no longer.

On this the ladies undertook to point out the ring-leaders of the disturbance, and the young gentlemen at once leaped down into the pit, to drive the unmannerly fellows out of doors. But the pit likewise drew its sabre, and, each side being about equal in numbers, a drawn battle ensued. Swords flashed and clashed, wigs were flung in the air, oaths were uttered, blood was spilt, women screamed, and were conducted out of doors. The gallery, meanwhile, rushed to the rescue of the pit, and, both combining against a common enemy, they were soon victorious. But now, rendered furious, they resolved to avenge themselves on Garrick. They therefore tore up the benches, smashed the

chandeliers, and rushing on the stage, cut the gimcrack Chinese scenery to pieces. The French dancers fled from the theatre with all possible speed, and Garrick betook himself in hot haste to his house in Southampton Street, whither the mob duly followed him, and broke his windows.

'The Chinese Festival' was therefore finally withdrawn, and its place in due time supplied by a pantomime called 'Fortunatus'; all the players in which being thoroughly British, it was received with great favour by the town.

CHAPTER XVII.

Peg Woffington's Last Years at Covent Garden—Her Famous Characters—The Comedy of 'The Careless Husband'—Introduction of a Scene from Real Life—Its Sparkling Dialogue—Its Plot and Characters—Peg Woffington as Lady Betty Modish—Opinion of an Anonymous Critic—Her Last Night—Cibber, Quin, Barry, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, and Lady Coventry—The Curtain Descends upon the Woffington's Life.

FROM 1754 to 1757 Peg Woffington continued to delight the town by her sprightly acting in a round of famous comedies. The excellent plays of the last century being wholly unaided by the stage carpenter's tricks or the upholsterer's embellishments, solely depended on the abilities of the players for success. Remembering this, it is a high tribute to record that no drama in which the actress performed lacked success. As Lady Townley in 'The Provoked Husband'; as Mrs. Sullen in 'The Beaux's Stratagem'; as Angelina in 'Love Makes a Man'; as Lady Betty Modish in

'The Careless Husband,' she was pronounced inimitable. Her dignified air, her exquisite grace, her tone of refinement in the personation of ladies of quality and pleasure had never been equalled.

Perhaps of all her representations of women of fashion, she excelled as Lady Betty Modish in Colley Cibber's famous comedy. The interest of the play depends not so much on the plot as on the dialogue; which abounds in an easy turn of thought and expression, and a readiness of wit and repartee ever productive of delight to the intelligent audiences of the past century. It was, indeed, affirmed that the comedy contained 'the most elegant dialogue, and the most perfect knowledge of the manners of persons in real high life extant in any dramatic piece which has yet appeared in any language whatever.' Moreover, we learn that 'the excellent moral, together with the happy choice of characters, the natural and genteel diction, and the spirit of gaiety which pervades the whole, rendered it an acknowledged favourite.

Perhaps a fact which gave it additional interest in the eyes of the public, was that Colley Cibber submitted every scene of it to the revisal and correction of the famous Lady Macclesfield; of whose taste and judgment as to genteel life and manners he had the highest opinion. Moreover, a scene which happened in this lady's house was, by her permission, introduced into the comedy, by way of imparting to it a more piquant flavour.

It will be remembered my Lady Macclesfield announced that her son, afterwards known as Richard Savage, was the offspring of Earl Rivers; whereon her lord sought and obtained a divorce, in consequence of

which Lady Macclesfield resumed her maiden name, and was known as Miss Mason. But not for long. Being a lady of pleasure, and, moreover, remarkable for her beauty, she wedded Colonel Brett, whose physical excellencies and moral worth equalled her own.* The one was in every way a complement of the other. A little while after their nuptials, the colonel was reported to be free in his gallantries with his lady's maid; a fact Mrs. Brett suspected. But her conjectures were soon changed into conviction; for, entering her room one day, she found the gallant colonel and her maid both fast asleep in two chairs. Her philosophy, like her virtue, may be described as easy. She did not for a moment think of disturbing her spouse from his comfortable nap; but she tied her handkerchief round his neck, by way of intimating she had discovered his intrigue; of which, however, she otherwise took no notice. This was the domestic scene which she gave Colley Cibber permission to introduce into his comedy for the better diversion of the town.

To give a picture of the manners 'of persons in real high life,' the morality depicted was, as in duty bound, remarkable for its freedoms, yet free from vulgar coarseness; an advantage seldom to be found in the plays of the time. 'The best critics,' says Colley Cibber in his preface, 'have long and justly complained that the coarseness of most characters in our late comedies have been unfit entertainments for people of quality, especially the ladies; and therefore I was long in hopes that some able pen (whose expectation did not hang upon the profits of success) would generously attempt to reform the town into a better taste than the world

* See 'Court Life Below Stairs,' vol. i. p. 293, ed. 1882.

generally allows them. But nothing of that kind having lately appeared, that would give me an opportunity of being wise at another's expense, I found it impossible any longer to resist the secret temptation of my vanity; and so even struck the first blow myself. The event has now convinced me that whoever sticks closely to nature, can't easily write above the understanding of the galleries, though at the same time he may possibly deserve applause of the boxes.'

The scene of this excellent comedy is laid at Windsor, and its seven characters play parts almost equal in importance. These are Sir Charles Easy, his lady, and her maid Mrs. Edging, Lady Graveairs, who loves Sir Charles, and Lady Betty Modish, with whom Lord Morelove and Lord Foppington are in love; the former with the intention of proposing an honourable marriage, the latter with the idea of carrying on a fashionable intrigue.

Sir Charles, a character modelled on Colonel Brett, is a gay soul and a gallant; yet a man who never seemed other than he was, even in his vices, one too in whom, notwithstanding the lightness of his morals, there still shone forth an undesigning honesty, too often absent in smoother faces. In the services of most women, save his wife (a virtuous, discreet, and suffering lady), he was a slave.

'How like children do we judge of happiness,' says he. 'When I was stinted in my fortune, almost everything was a pleasure to me; because most things then being out of my reach, I had always the pleasure of hoping for them; now Fortune's in my hand, she's as insipid as an old acquaintance. It's mighty silly, faith, just the same thing by my wife, too. I am told she's exceedingly handsome, nay, and have heard a great

many people say, she is certainly the best woman in the world. Why, I don't know but she may be, yet I could never find that her person or good qualities gave me any concern. In my eye, the woman has no more charms than my mother.'

As he philosophizes in this manner, my lady's maid, Mrs. Edging, enters the room, with a pretty, pert air. 'What's the matter, child?' says he; and adds, 'kiss me, hussy.' The hussy prays the deuce may fetch her, if she does; 'and, if you have anything to say to me again, I'll be burned,' says she. 'Some one has bely'd me to thee,' remarks Sir Charles. Whereon she tells him she has discovered a letter written to him by my Lady Graveairs, when she went to fetch his snuff-box out of his waistcoat pocket. At the very thought of it her blood rose; she could tear her ladyship to pieces; she would not stay in a family to be used at this rate, for, says she, quite saucy to Sir Charles, 'I'd have you know I have refused lords and dukes for your sake, and that I have had as many blue and green ribbons after me, for aught I know, as would have made me a silken apron.'

Hearing all this, Sir Charles promised to twist her pretty white neck, if she ever dares to read a letter of his again; and the maid vanishes at the footsteps of her mistress. Poor Lady Easy is a woman of much wisdom and patience, by reason of which she, though aware of her husband's deplorable faults, refrains from upbraiding him with her wrongs, as such would be but taking on herself a mean redress; neither does she bid defiance to his falsehood, which would but naturally provoke him to undo her. 'The uneasy thought of my continual jealousy may tease him to a fixed aversion,'

she wisely argues; 'and hitherto, though he neglects, I cannot think he hates me.' She therefore resolves that her eyes and her tongue shall be blind and silent to her wrongs, until by some gross, apparent proof of his misdoing, he forces her to see—and forgive it.

As she enters, Sir Charles is filled with kindness for her, mixed with reproach for himself. He hopes the air of Windsor agrees with her, and asks what kind of company would most please her. 'When business would permit it, yours,' she makes answer; 'and in your absence, a sincere friend that were truly happy in an honest husband, to sit a cheerful hour, and talk in mutual praise of our condition.' Then follows a dialogue, charmingly illustrative of the morals of the day.

'Are you, then, really very happy, my dear?' asks Sir Charles. She wonders why he should question it. 'Because,' says he, 'I fancy I am not as good to you as I should be. Nay, the deuce take me, if I don't really confess myself so bad, that I have often wondered how any woman of your sense, rank, and person could think it worth her while to have so many useless good qualities.'

'I can't boast of my good qualities,' says Lady Easy, 'nor, if I could, do I believe you would think 'em useless.'

'Nay,' asks her spouse, 'do you perceive that I am one tittle the better husband for your being so good a wife? Tell me truly, was you never jealous of me?'

'Did I ever give you a sign of it?' asks the poor lady.

'Um—that's true,' replies Sir Charles. 'But do you really think I never gave you occasion?'

'That's an odd question,' says my lady, evasively. 'But suppose you had?'

'Why, then, what good has your virtue done you, since all the good qualities of it could not keep me to yourself?'

'What occasion have you given me to suppose I have not kept you to myself?' asks Lady Easy; whereon Sir Charles finds himself pushed into a corner.

'I given you occasion!' replies he, in some confusion. 'Fy! my dear—you may be sure—I—look you, that is not the thing; but still a (death, what a blunder I have made)—a still— I say, madam, you sha'n't make me believe you have never been jealous of me, nor that you ever had any real cause; but I know women of your principles have more pride than those that have no principles at all; and where there is pride, there must be some jealousy, so that, if you are jealous, my dear, you know you wrong me, and—'

'Why, then,' replies she, with great truth, 'upon my word, my dear, I don't know that I ever wronged you that way in my life.'

'But suppose,' Sir Charles persists, 'I had given you a real cause to be jealous, how would you do then? Suppose, now, I were well with a woman of your own acquaintance, that, under pretence of frequent visits to you, should only come to carry on an affair with me—suppose, now, my Lady Graveairs and I were great, and so very familiar, that not only yourself, but half the town shall see it?'

She tells him that in such a case, she would cry herself sick in some dark closet, and forget her tears when he spoke kindly to her. And then she asks him

if he believed she ever had any ill thoughts of my Lady Graveairs. This shocks Sir Charles.

'O fy! child,' says the arrant schemer. 'Only, you know, she and I used to be a little free sometimes; so I had a mind to see if you thought there was any harm in it; but since I find you very easy, I think myself obliged to tell you that, upon my soul, my dear, I have so little regard to her person, that the deuce take me if I would not as soon have an affair with thy own woman.'

Lady Easy says, drily enough, she would as soon suspect him with one as with the other; on which Sir Charles asks her for a kiss, and declares he wishes he may die, if he does not think her a very fine woman.

As she is, at the conclusion of this conversation, going forth to church, a servant enters, to tell Sir Charles my Lord Morelove is at the chocolate house, but will wait upon him presently. Hearing this, Lady Easy, knowing he has been drawn to Windsor by Lady Betty Modish, with whom he is desperately in love, bids Sir Charles ask him to dinner; a hospitality she will likewise offer Lady Betty, at whose lodgings she will call.

When my Lord Morelove enters, he is charged by Sir Charles with following Lady Betty, 'and to make you easy,' says he, 'I cannot see why a man that can ride fifty miles after a poor stag, should be ashamed of running twenty in chase of a fine woman, that in all probability will make him so much the better sport;' at which speech my lord embraces him.

Lady Betty Modish, a character the Woffington delighted to personate, though secretly in love with Morelove, professes indifference to him; she being a coquette of the first water, and a woman much given to

mischief. So she encourages my Lord Foppington, a married man, but a rare gallant, and likewise a friend of his, young Startup, a pert coxcomb just come to a small estate and a great periwig, who may be seen with a cane dangling at his button, his breast open, his hands ungloved, and with one eye tucked under his hat; in fact, the most prodigious fop imaginable, who flings himself among the women, and won't speak to a commoner when a lord is in company.

Now Lady Betty, the better to hide her affection for Lord Morelove, not only encouraged such coxcombs, but treated her lover shamefully. To pick up a quarrel, she would appoint him to visit her alone, and, though she had promised to see no other company the whole day, when he went he was sure to find her among the laughter of noisy fops, coquettes, and coxcombs, dissolutely gay; her eyes brilliant with transports at their flattery, and vanity at her own powers of pleasing. Then, when she had thrown away four hours of good humour upon such a worthless lot, the moment they were gone, she grew dull to him, sank into a distasteful spleen, complained she had talked herself into a headache, and indulged in the dear delight of seeing him in pain; and, by the time she had stretched and gaped him heartily out of patience, she of a sudden remembered she had outsat her appointment with my Lady Fiddlefaddle, and immediately ordered her coach to the Park.

It happened they had just had one of their pretty quarrels when my lord called on his friend. In disputing with her upon the conduct of women, he had taken the liberty of telling her how far he thought she erred in hers. She told him he was rude, and that she could never believe any man could love a woman that thought

her in the wrong in anything she had a mind to—at least, if he had a mind to tell her so. This provoked him into her whole character, with as much spite and civil malice as he had seen her bestow upon a woman of true beauty, when the men first toasted her; in the middle of which she told him she desired to be alone, and that he might take his odious, proud heart along with him. On this he bowed low, vowed he or his proud heart would never be humbled by the finest woman, and left her. An hour later, he whipped into his coach for London; but, by the time he got to Hounslow, he found her so much in the right, that he cursed his pride for contradicting her at all, and became convinced that no woman could be in the wrong to a man that she had in her power. He therefore turned the horses' heads, and drove back to Windsor.

Having unburdened himself to Sir Charles, they both plot to pique the proud beauty into showing concern for her ardent lover by provoking her jealousy. At this point, a lackey comes from my Lord Foppington, to present his lordship's compliments to Sir Charles, and say, if his honour is at leisure, he will wait on him when he is dressed. Sir Charles, in return, sends him back his services, and hopes his lordship will do him the honour of dining with him that day.

'We may have occasion for him in our design upon Lady Betty,' says Sir Charles; 'and if you have a mind to be let into the mystery of making love without pain, here's one that's master of the art.'

'Pr'ythee, what sense of love has he?' asks my lord with some disdain.

'Faith,' answers Sir Charles, 'very near as much as a man of sense ought to have. I grant you, he knows

not how to value a woman truly deserving; but he has a pretty just esteem for most ladies about town.'

In the second act, Lady Easy and Lady Betty hold critical converse over a new scarf belonging to the latter, which was pronounced 'all extravagance, both in mode and fancy,' and was 'so new, so lively, so noble, so coquet, that 'twas most charming,' Lady Easy declares herself half angry to see a woman of sense concerned so much about her outside, 'for when we have taken our best pains about it, 'tis the beauty of the mind alone that gives us lasting value,' says she.

On hearing this speech, my Lady Betty Modish is amazingly diverted.

'Oh, my dear, my dear,' says her friend, 'you have been a married woman to a fine purpose indeed, that you know so little of the taste of mankind. Take my word, a new fashion upon a fine woman is often a greater proof of her value than you are aware of.'

This my Lady Easy cannot comprehend, when her friend tells her she cannot see a woman of spirit has any business but to dress and make the men like her. *A propos* of which, Lady Easy pleads for Morelove, a man of worth and sense. At which Lady Betty laughs. Being a woman of much experience, she gives it as her opinion that men of sense make the best fools in the world; for their sincerity and good-breeding threw them so entirely into a woman's power, and gave her such an agreeable thirst for using them ill, to show her authority, that it was impossible to quench it. There was ten thousand times more trouble with a coxcomb.

'But, methinks, my Lord Morelove's manner to you might move any woman to a sense of his merit,' pleads Lady Easy.

'Ah,' answers proud Lady Betty, 'but would it not be hard, my dear, for a poor weak woman to have a man of his quality and reputation in her power, and not let the world see him there? Would any creature sit new dressed all day in her closet? Could you bear to have a sweet-fancied suit, and never show it at the play, or the drawing-room?'

Lady Easy suggests it might, without care, be worn out; but her friend cries pooh! and says my Lord Morelove's a mere Indian damask, not to be worn out. 'Upon my conscience, I must give him to my woman at last,' says she. 'I begin to be known by him; had I not best leave him off, my dear?'

'If you found you did not like him at first, why did you encourage him?' asks Lady Easy.

But my Lady Betty has a ready answer. 'Why, what would you have one do?' says she. 'I could no more chuse a man by my eye than a shoe: one must draw 'em on a little, to see if they are right to one's foot.'

Lady Easy declares she would no more play the fool with a man she could not love than wear a shoe that pinched her.

'Ah,' replies her friend, archly; 'but then the poor wretch tells one he'll widen 'em, or do anything; and is so civil and silly, that one does not know how to return such a trifle as a pair of shoes or a heart upon a fellow's hands again.'

At this, Lady Easy is wrathful, and wonders how she could bear to see a coxcomb like Lord Foppington draw up his breath, stare her full in the face, and cry, 'Gad, you're handsome!'

'My dear,' says Lady Betty, with that fine sense

of the world's ways which distinguished her utterances, 'fine fruit will have flies about it, but, poor things, they do no harm: for, if you observe, people are generally most apt to chuse that the flies have been busy with.'

The ladies having given their opinions of mankind, mankind in the persons of Sir Charles, Morelove, and Foppington, give theirs of womankind in a manner which may be described as free. As the two former converse, the latter enters. They both greet him heartily.

'My dear Lord Foppington,' says Sir Charles.

'My lord, I kiss your hands,' says Morelove. 'You look extremely well.'

His lordship declares that to see his friends look so, may easily give a *vermeil* to his complexion. Then they ask him what business has brought him to Windsor.

'Why then, *entre nous*,' replies this airy coxcomb, 'there is a certain *fille-de-joye* about the court here that loves winning at cards better than all the fine things I have been able to say to her: so I have brought an odd thousand bill in my pocket, that I design, *tête-à-tête*, to play off with her at piquet.'

Morelove replies that she must be a woman of consequence by the value he sets upon her favours; whilst Sir Charles declares nothing's above the price of a fine woman.

'Nay, look you, gentlemen,' says Foppington, 'the price may not happen to be altogether so high neither; for I fancy I know enough of the game to make it but an even bet I get her for nothing; for if she happen to lose a good sum to me, I shall buy her with her own money.'

Lord Morelove confessed this was new.

'You know,' Foppington explained, ''tis not impossible but I may be five hundred pounds deep with her; then bills may fall short, and the devil's in't if I want assurance to ask her to pay me some way or other.'

'And a man,' says the gallant Sir Charles, 'must be a churl indeed that won't take a lady's personal security.'

Whereon they three laugh right merrily.

The conversation continuing on the same interesting theme, Foppington brags that he would no more give up his heart to a woman than his sword to a bully; for they were both as insolent as the devil after it. *À propos* to which Sir Charles reminds him his chief business then at Windsor was to surrender his heart to a woman of fashion; but he protests he merely desired the reputation of an affair with her, that being the most inviting part of an intrigue.

'But how can you, that profess indifference,' says Lord Morelove, 'think it worth your while to come so often up to the price of a woman of quality?'

'Because, you must know,' replies the fop, 'that most of them begin now to come down to reason, at least, with the wiser sort, 'tis not of late so very expensive; now and then a *partie quarrie*, a jaunt or two in a hack to an Indian house, a little chint, an odd thing for a gown or so; and in three days after you may meet her at the conveniency of trying it *chez Mademoiselle d'Epingle*.'

'Ay, ay, my lord,' chimes in Sir Charles; 'and when you are there, you know, what between a little chat, a dish of tea, Mademoiselle's good-humour, and a *petit*

chanson or two, the devil's in't if a man can't fool away the time till he sees how it looks upon her by candle-light.'

Then they away to dinner, and my Lady Betty Modish, who assumes an insolence that might furnish out a thousand devils, flirts desperately with Foppington, until Morelove is almost distracted. In this mood, she says a thousand spiteful things to torture his heart, and is in such high humour, that she laughs affection and constancy to scorn, if you please.

'Sincerity in love,' says she, 'is as much out of fashion as sweetstuff; nobody takes it now.'

'Oh, no mortal, madam,' replies Foppington, 'unless it be here and there a squire that's making his lawful court to the cherry-cheeked charms of my lord bishop's great, fat daughter in the country.'

At this Lady Betty laughs, and declares he is a most provoking creature, and throws her hand carelessly on his, encouraged by which, he ventures to make another joke at the expense of the time-honoured custom of marriage.

'It is indeed,' says he, 'a prodigious security to one's inclinations. A man's likely to take a world of pains in an employment where he can't be turned out for his idleness.'

Her ladyship laughs again, and then ventures a sneer at reputation.

'Indeed,' she remarks, 'that jewel is a very fanciful business. One shall not see a homely creature in town, but wears it in her mouth as monstrously as the Indians do bobs at their lips; and it really becomes them just alike.'

She in her turn is wrought to fury by Morelove

flirting with my Lady Graveairs, whose person and condition seem cut out for the ease of a lover; inasmuch as she was young and handsome, wild, and a widow. Moreover, her vexation is increased by her lover's speeches. He confesses to Foppington that he has the worst judgment in the world for a woman, for no man had been more deceived.

'Then,' says Foppington, 'your lordship, I presume, has been apt to chuse in a mask, or by candle-light?'

'In a mask indeed, my lord,' he replies; 'and of all masks the most dangerous.'

'Pray, what may that be?' asks Lord Foppington.

'A bare face.'

'Your lordship will pardon me,' says Foppington, 'if I don't so readily comprehend how a woman's bare face can hide her face.'

'It often hides her heart,' says Morelove; 'and therefore I sometimes think it a more dangerous mask than a piece of velvet: that's rather a mark than a disguise of an ill woman. But the mischiefs skulking behind a beauteous form give no warning; they are always sure, fatal, and innumerable.'

'Oh, barbarous aspersion,' cries Lady Betty. 'My Lord Foppington, have you nothing to say for the poor women?'

His lordship has: 'I must confess, madam,' says he, 'nothing of this nature happened in my course of amours. I always judge the beauteous form of a woman to be the most agreeable part of her composition; and, when once a lady does me the honour to toss that into my arms, I think myself obliged in good nature not to quarrel about the rest of her equipage.'

Next comes the scene where Lady Easy discovers Sir Charles, without his periwig, and Edging both asleep in two easy-chairs, upon which the poor lady trembles and starts, breaks into blank verse, and calls on virtue, patience, and reason to protect her. Then, her eyes falling on Sir Charles's head (bare of its periwig), she lays her handkerchief upon it, lest in the unwholesome air some languishing distemper might overtake him. When he awakes and finds he has been discovered, he grows suddenly conscience-stricken, and makes vows of future constancy to his lady—whose virtues are now most plain to his sight. Then they both unite in bringing Lady Betty and Morelove together; a fact that is accomplished without much trouble. The proud flirt, who fancies Lord Morelove's affection has turned away from her, owns she has been wrong, and that she used Foppington but as the tool of her resentment. 'Send for him,' says she, 'and you shall be witness of the contempt and detestation I have for any forward hopes his vanity may have given him.'

'Oh, let my soul,' says poor Morelove, 'thus bending to your power, adore this soft, descending goodness;' and he kisses her hand and makes her a thousand pretty speeches. This reconciliation does not much discomfort Foppington's peace of mind. 'Look you, Charles,' he says, to Morelove, ''tis true, I did deign to have played with her alone, but he that will keep well with the ladies must be content to humour them in their whims.' Then when Lady Betty asks his pardon for the liberties she has taken with him, he replies, good-humouredly, 'Oh, madam, don't be under the confusion of an apology on my account; for in cases of this nature I am never disappointed, but when

bed, with the blind
no light was admitte
of a tea-kettle, in ord
illness had made in her be
One morning, it happened
to my lord, in the handwr
her sister. Lady Coventry bro
fate in the letter. It lamented he
of the grave, whom her sister might n
It nearly killed her. 'I was called to
her almost fainting, and dying away,' wri
George Selwyn, who loved the countess
she soon after recovered, and I took my l
I was gone, the same scene was several
Her attendants thought her expiring.' I
weeks of her life, she would permit no o
taking her medicines and cordials, poor so
the curtains of her bed, which she would
be drawn.

At the same time, Peg Woffington,
scarcely less beautiful, or less sought a
attended by her sister; the child whom
in the garret in George's Court, the yo
she had married to a scion of the nobili
willed the sum of five thousand pounds
amassed, together with her valuable je
mother she had long allowed thirty
O'Keeffe remembered seeing this 're
old lady, in her short, black velvet
rich fringe, a diamond ring, and a sma
going the rounds of the Catholic cha
her neighbours.'

Now that the Woffington lay dying

she was not at peace.
. Bellamy, with whom
squabble regarding the
orge Anne makes much in
was truly feminine in its
ation, they refusing to ex-
other for months. Now how-
on besought Miss Bellamy to come to
ted that they might be reconciled, when
rds of peace were exchanged between
s one of the last acts of her life. She
th of March, 1760. Her remains were
beneath Teddington Church; in which
s the following inscription:

monument lies the body of Margaret
inster, born Oct. 18th, 1720, who departed
h 28th, 1760, aged 39 years.'

d not been blameless. Endowed with the
ilities attendant on genius, which are
sure and peril of that heaven-sent gift,
to a leading position in the theatrical
ed by the most brilliant and fashionable
eriod, sought after for her wit, lauded
oved for her worth, she had been led by
the strict, straight path. But her
loyal to her friends, generous to the
to the afflicted, and in her last years
and suffered.

ll now cast a stone upon her grave?

THE END.

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00024039

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Government of Maharashtra
on 23 January, 2019